University College Hospital

Imaging Department

Having an MRI Scan of the Penis
If you need a large print, audio, braille, easy read, age-friendly or translated copy of this document, please contact us on 020 3456 7002. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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1 Introduction

This booklet contains information for patients and carers about having an MRI scan of your penis.

2 What does MRI mean?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is an imaging tool that uses a powerful magnet to scan your body.

The MRI scanner is a tube which is open at both ends. You can be seen at all times by the Radiographer.

The MRI scanner has a weight limit of 250kgs. Your referrer will need to make alternative arrangements if you are over this weight.

3 How can an MRI help?

The MRI scan can help in the diagnosis and treatment of your health condition. There is no use of radiation or X-rays.

4 What are the risks of an MRI?

MRI scans are not suitable for everyone. The Radiographers have to be 100% certain that you meet the safety standards before entering the MRI scanning room. There are no known risks of having an MRI if you meet the safety standards.
You will be sent a safety questionnaire to complete with your appointment letter. Please fill in this before your appointment. If you answer yes to any of the questions please call the department.

For this scan most patients receive an injection of Caverject® into the base of the penis (further information below). The most common side effect of Caverject® is a prolonged erection. If your erection does not go down after 4 hours or becomes painful, you must immediately return to the hospital or your local Accident and Emergency department. Remember to take ‘Caverject® injection in the penis’ information leaflet with you.

Some patients also require a contrast injection into a vein in the arm. Like all medications, there is a small risk of side effects or an allergic reaction to the MRI contrast (Gadolinium). The most common side effects are itching, nausea or vomiting. These are usually soon after the injection. Please inform the Radiographer if you experience any symptoms. If you experience any symptoms after hours, please contact your local Accident and Emergency department.

If you suffer from Renal (Kidney) Impairment or Failure contact your referrer to organise a GFR blood test to assess this. You may not receive this contrast injection if your GFR result is too low. The Radiologist will make this decision.

The contrast is excreted from your body when you go to the toilet. There is evidence that some people retain some of the contrast longer than expected. There are currently no known side effects.
5 What will happen if I choose not to have an MRI?
Your referring doctor will discuss alternative options with you.

6 What alternatives are available?
Imaging alternatives will need to be discussed with your referrer.

7 How should I prepare for an MRI?
Your appointment letter will include questionnaires that are essential for the MRI scan. Please fill in these before your appointment. If you answer yes to any of the questions please call the Imaging department.
You will receive a ‘Patient Information’ leaflet with your appointment letter explaining the examination.

You must arrive 1 hour before your appointment time. This is to allow for the Radiographer time to check your questionnaires with you, for you to get changed and lock your valuables away if required. This time is also used to explain the MRI examination and a chance for you to ask any questions.

The Radiologist will assess you for a Caverject® injection and give you time to read the ‘Caverject® injection in the penis’ information leaflet. Not all patients require the injection.
Caverject® is a drug called prostaglandin E1 or ‘alprostadil’. It is injected into the penis to induce an artificial erection to improve the quality of the images. Each patient is different, so dose and time for effect can vary. Some patients may require a further injection.

The Radiologist will discuss your medical history with you before the injection. There are several medical conditions where it is recommended not to have this injection. These include sickle cell disease, heart disease, leukaemia, multiple myeloma and priapism.

It is also important you inform the Radiologist of any medication you are taking for high blood pressure, respiratory or heart disease, widening blood vessels, blood thinners, or any other treatments for erectile dysfunction.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown.

For safety reasons your belongings cannot go into the MRI scanning room, this includes your shoes. There are small lockers outside the room for your belongings. If possible, please leave your valuables at home.

For some MRI scans of the penis an injection of contrast is a routine part of the examination. A cannula (a small plastic tube with a needle) with be placed into your arm and will remain in for the length of the scan. The cannula is used to administer the contrast.

If you are claustrophobic, we recommend you talk with your referring doctor or your GP who may prescribe medication to help you relax. We cannot prescribe this medication for you in
the MRI department. Please inform the Radiographer if you are claustrophobic or anxious.

**Interpreter Services**

If you require the services of an official hospital interpreter please inform your doctor that has referred you for your scan or contact the Imaging Department.

You may bring along a relative, carer or a friend who speaks and understands English to translate for you.

**Childcare**

We are unable to offer childcare facilities. If you need to bring your children with you, please bring along somebody who can look after them while you are being scanned.

**8 Asking for your consent**

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead with the scan, by law we must ask you to consent to the test. This confirms that you agree to have the procedure and understand what it involves. The doctor that refers you for the scan will explain the risks, benefits and any alternative tests. If you are unsure about any aspect of your scan please do not hesitate to speak to either your doctor, or the Radiographer who will carry out the scan. You can withdraw your consent at any time.
9 What happens during an MRI?

You will be asked to lie on your back, feet toward the scanner. Pads will be used to align your penis straight and a device will then be placed over your pelvis to capture the images.

The MRI makes a loud knocking sound which changes throughout the scan. The table may vibrate. This is all normal. You will be given earplugs and headphones that help reduce the noise.

The scan will last approximately 30 to 40 minutes and it is important to remain still during the scan otherwise the images become blurred.

If you require the contrast, it will be injected through the cannula using an electronic injector.

During the scan you may experience tingling in your hands and feet and may feel an increase in body temperature. These are normal sensations. Please use the contact buzzer if you feel uncomfortable.

10 What should I expect after an MRI?

If you have a cannula, it will be removed and you will be able to get dressed and go. You may eat and drink as normal following your scan unless you have other tests on the day with instructions not to eat or drink.

You will not receive your results immediately. The images will be reviewed by a Radiologist (a specialist doctor in interpreting MRI scans) and a report is sent to your referrer. If you are
unsure who referred you for the MRI scan you can check with the Radiographers or Imaging Reception.

If you do not already have an appointment to return to the clinic, you should contact your clinic to arrange this appointment.

11 Where can I get more information?

University College Hospital London
https://www.uclh.nhs.uk/PandV/PIL

The Department of Health
www.dh.gov.uk

The NHS Clinical Knowledge Summaries website
www.cks.nhs.uk

UCL Hospitals cannot accept responsibility for information provided by other organisations.
12 References

https://www.caverject.com/

Royal College of Radiologists
http://www.rcr.ac.uk

Gadolinium

13 Contact details

UCH Switchboard
Tel: 020 3456 7890
Imaging Booking Centre 9am-5pm Weekdays
(To change or cancel an appointment)
Tel: 020 3456 7002
Email: uclh.referrals.imaging.booking.office@nhs.net

Hospital Transport Services
Tel: 020 3456 7010

Website: www.uclh.nhs.uk
14 How to find us

Please read your appointment letter carefully as there are several locations for our MRI scanners.
Space for notes and questions