

# University College Hospital

## Having an MRI scan Imaging Department



If you would like this leaflet in another format, for example: large print or audio, or in translation please contact us on 020 3456 7002 . We will try our best to meet your needs.

If you have any questions after reading this booklet, please contact us on 020 3456 7002.

You will need to know your hospital number. This can be found on your appointment letter.



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## 1 Introduction

This booklet contains information for patients, parents and carers about having an MRI scan. An MRI scan can be of different body parts like your head, spine, hips, knee or foot.

## 2 What is MRI?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is an imaging tool that uses a powerful magnet to scan your body. The MRI scan will help in the diagnosis and treatment of your health condition. There is no use of radiation or X-rays.

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 Are there any risks of having 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.

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.

There are no known risks of having an MRI if you meet the safety standards.

## 4 What if I am claustrophobic?

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.

## 5 What will happen if I chose not to have an MRI?

Your referring doctor will discuss the alternative options with you.

## 6 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.

## 7 Before the MRI scan

You will receive a 'Patient Information' leaflet with your appointment letter explaining the examination. Some scans require you not to eat or drink for a set time before the examination, **please read the letter carefully.**

You must arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. For some specialist procedures you may have to arrive 1 hour before.

For some scans you will change into a hospital gown scan. We have lockers for your valuables.

For most MRI scans you will need to have an injection of contrast dye. A cannula (a small plastic tube with a needle) will be placed into your arm and will remain in for the length of the scan. The cannula is used to administer contrast dye and sometimes a muscle relaxant.

## **8 What is a contrast dye?**

The contrast dye is a colourless liquid called Gadolinium. This is a routine part of this examination. There is a small risk of a reaction to the contrast. If you suffer from Renal (Kidney) Impairment or Failure contact your referrer to organise a GFR test to assess this.

## **9 What is the muscle relaxant?**

This is called Buscopan<sup>®</sup> which reduces your bowel motion to reduce blurring of the images. It is a routine part of this examination. It also relaxes the muscles in your eyes and your vision may become blurred. This should subside by the time the scan is completed. If not inform the Radiographer and we advise you remain in the department until your normal vision returns.

## **10 During the MRI scan**

You will be asked to lie on the scanner. Some scans you will lie head first and others feet first.

You will be given a contact buzzer. If you experience any

problems you can squeeze the buzzer and the Radiographer will talk to you.

Some scans take 20 minutes where as others may take up to and over an hour.

The MRI makes a loud knocking sound which changes throughout the scan. This is all normal.

Some scans may also require you to hold your breath for short periods of time. You will be given headphones that help reduce the noise and you will hear the Radiographer telling you when to hold your breath.

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.

## **11 Are there any side effects?**

It is rare to react to the contrast dye. 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.

After having Buscopan<sup>®</sup>, very rarely patients can develop pain and redness in both eyes, which occurs in the 24 hours after the test. If this happens please attend the Accident and

Emergency Department at your local hospital for a check-up, but please remember this is very rare.

## 12 After the MRI scan

The cannula will be removed and you will be able to get dressed and go. You may eat and drink as normal following your scan.

## 13 How will I get my results?

You will not immediately receive your results. The images will be reviewed by a Radiologist and a report is sent to your referrer. If you do not already have an appointment to return to the clinic, you should contact your clinic to arrange this appointment.

## 14 Special information for female patients of child-bearing age (12-55 years)

If you have reason to believe that you may be pregnant please inform the Imaging Contact Centre **before** starting the preparation, and **before** attending your appointment.

### **Pregnancy**

To date, there have been no reported effects from MRI to the unborn child. As a precaution we advise against scanning in the first trimester.

### **Breastfeeding**

If you are breastfeeding we advise that you do not breastfeed for 24 hours after receiving the contrast dye as a safety precaution. It is also advised that you express and discard the breast milk during this time.

## **15 Interpreter services**

If you require the services of an official hospital interpreter please arrange this with the doctor that has referred you for your scan.

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

## **16 Child care**

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.

## **17 Frequently asked questions**

### **Can I take my normal medication?**

All medication can be taken as normal.

### **Will I need to bring a dressing gown?**

This is not essential, but if you feel more comfortable wearing a dressing gown, then please bring one with you on the day of your test.

### **Can I wear my own clothes for the scan?**

Yes. You can wear your own clothes as long as they are metal free for example no zippers or metal buttons.

### **Can I bring a relative or friend with me?**

Yes.

### **Will the test be painful?**

The cannula may be uncomfortable.

### **How long will the procedure take?**

The time for the scan will vary from patient to patient. The scan can take from 20 minutes up to 60 minutes.

### **Can my I eat and drink normally after the test?**

Yes.

## **18 Where can I get more information?**

University College Hospital London

**<http://www.uclh.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>**

The Department of Health

**[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)**

Royal College of Radiologists

**<http://www.goingfora.com/>**

The UCLH Children and young people's website has information and short films made with our patients about having an MRI and other hospital treatments.

**<http://www.childrenandyoungpatients.uclh.nhs.uk/>**

Other NHS hospitals that specialise in children provide information for MRI and other hospital treatments.

Evelina Children's Hospital

**<http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens/services/childrens-mri/overview.aspx>**

Great Ormond Street Hospital

**<http://www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical-conditions/procedures-and-treatments/your-child-is-having-an-mri-scan/?locale=en>**

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

## **19 Travelling to the hospital**

No car parking is available at the hospital. Street parking is limited and restricted to a maximum of 2 hours.

**Please note the University College Hospital lies outside, but very close to the Central London Congestion Charging Zone.**

### **Public transport**

#### **Tube**

The nearest tube stations, which are within 2 minutes walk are:

Warren Street (Northern and Victoria lines)

Euston Square (Hammersmith & City, Circle and Metropolitan lines)

## **Overground trains**

Euston, King Cross & St Pancras and Kings Cross Thames link railway stations are within 10-15 minutes walk.

## **Bus**

Bus services are shown on the map on page [XXX](#)

Further travel information can be obtained from <http://www.tfl.gov.uk> Tel: 020 3054 4040

## **Hospital transport services**

If you feel that you are eligible for transport please ( 020 3456 7010 (Mon to Fri 8am-8pm) to speak to a member of the Transport Assessment Booking Team.

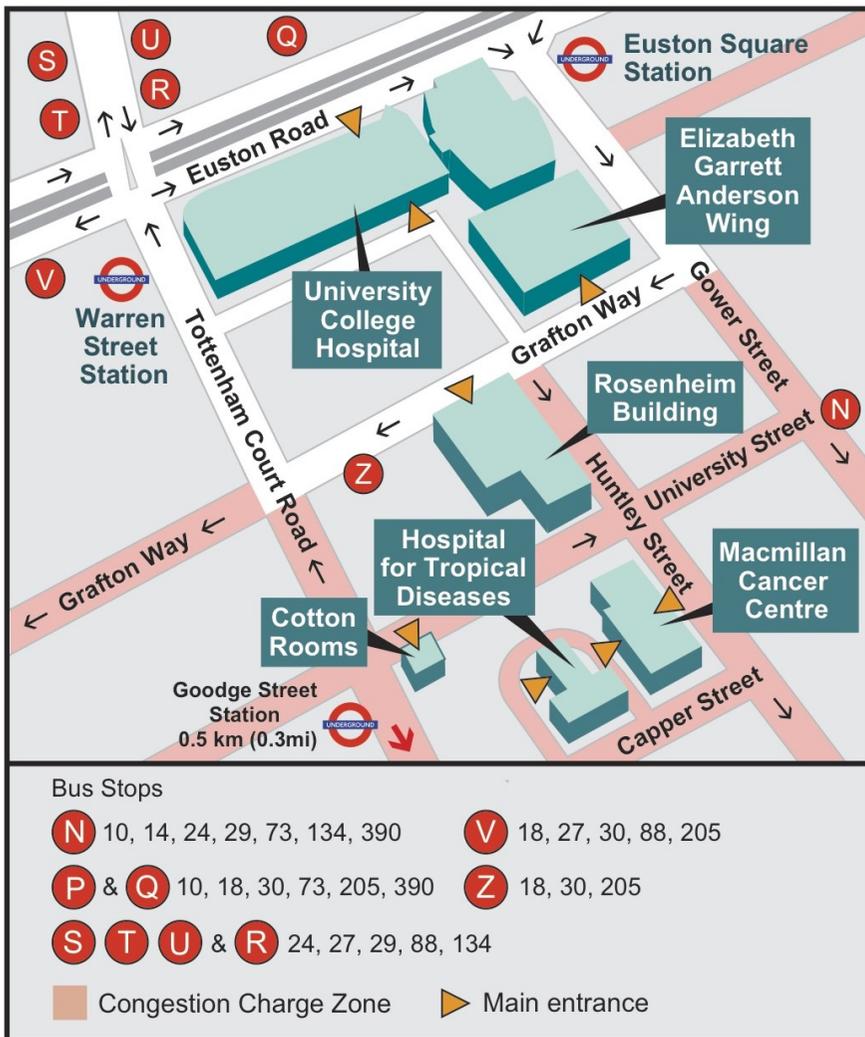
You will need to call at least **7** days before your appointment.

If you have a clinical condition or mobility problem that is unlikely to improve you will be exempt from the assessment process. However, you will still need to contact the assessment team so that your transport can be booked.

If your appointment is cancelled by the hospital or you cannot attend it, please ring 020 3456 7010 to cancel your transport.

## **Can an escort be arranged to accompany me in hospital transport?**

This will depend on your clinical condition or mobility. If you meet the criteria then an escort will be booked to accompany you to and from the hospital. However, we aim to keep these to a minimum as escorts take up seats that would otherwise be used for patients.



## 20 Where is UCH main hospital?

If you have an appointment at the UCH main hospital site, use the map below:



## 21 Useful telephone numbers

### **UCH Switchboard**

Tel: 0845 155 5000 or 020 3456 7890

### **Imaging Booking Centre (to change or cancel an appointment)**

Tel: 020 3456 7002

### **Hospital Transport Services**

Tel: 020 3456 7010

## 22 References

Royal College of Radiologists

<http://www.rcr.ac.uk>

Gadolinium

[www.guerbert.com](http://www.guerbert.com)

Buscopan®

[www.boehringer-ingelheim.co.uk](http://www.boehringer-ingelheim.co.uk)

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## Space for notes and questions

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We are committed to  
delivering top-quality patient  
care, excellent education  
and world class research

**Safety**  
**Kindness**  
**Teamwork**  
**Improving**