

Having an MRI arthrogram

Information for Patients



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Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having an MRI arthrogram - it explains how the test is done, what to expect, and what the possible risks are.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your referring doctor or GP.

What is an MRI arthrogram?

Your doctor has asked us to perform this test to work out what has caused your symptoms and how to treat it. There are two parts to this test:

1. First, we will inject a small amount of dye directly into your joint, using low dose X rays (fluoroscopy) to show us where to do the injection.
2. After this, you will be taken to the MRI scanner for your scan.

The MRI scanner is operated by a Radiographer, who is a professional trained to carry out X-rays and other imaging procedures. The pictures are displayed on a computer workstation for examination by the Radiologist, who is a doctor specially trained to interpret the images and carry out more complex imaging examinations.

Are there any risks?

1. Injection

There are small risks associated with this injection, which you should be aware of before you proceed. The radiologist doing your procedure will talk you through this when you arrive.

Discomfort

You may experience some discomfort immediately after the procedure. This is usually mild and can be helped with over-the-counter painkillers if required.

Feeling of instability

Your joint may feel unstable after the injection. This will improve within 24 hours of the procedure. Do not try to lift or push anything heavy, or drive until it feels safe to do so.

Bleeding

This is unlikely to cause you a problem. If you have a medical condition that affects your blood clotting, please let us know in advance. If you are on anticoagulant or antiplatelet medication, you are more likely to experience bruising and bleeding, please let us know about this when you come in for your injection.

Infection: If you experience redness, swelling or tenderness around the injection site, please see your GP or a walk-in clinic within 24 hours as this may require treatment.

2. MRI scan

There's no evidence that the strong magnetic fields and radio waves used in an MRI cause damage to the human body, and for this reason, they're considered very safe. But if you have metal objects or implants, you may be unsuitable as they may be affected by the powerful magnets – this is the reason a safety questionnaire is completed prior to scanning.

You will be asked to remove any jewelry, hair clips, piercings and external devices that are safe to remove before entering the MRI scanning room. You should also leave keys, other metallic objects, bank cards and mobile phones outside of the room too, as they can be attracted to the magnets in the MRI scanner.

A small number of patients find MRI examinations difficult because of the partly enclosed nature of the scanner, causing claustrophobia but most people can manage it with the support of the radiology staff.

What do I need to do to prepare for my scan?

Taking tablets and medicines

Continue to take any regular medication as normal, unless asked otherwise. Let us know in advance if you have any allergies, take any blood thinning medication, or any medication that suppresses your immune system.

Pregnancy

Patients are asked to contact the Radiology department if there is a possibility of being pregnant. There is no evidence that MRI is unsafe in pregnancy, but as a precaution, we do not perform MRI on pregnant ladies unless it is essential.

Driving

You will be unable to drive following the procedure, therefore you will need to arrange somebody to drive you home.

MRI Safety Questionnaire

The magnetic field used for MRI scans is very strong and can affect metal or electronic implants. You will be sent an MRI Safety questionnaire, which asks about any metal implants that you may have. Please take time to read through and complete the questionnaire accurately. If all the answers are 'no' then please bring the completed questionnaire to your appointment. If there are answers that are 'yes', then please contact the department for advice.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you need to reschedule or require any reasonable adjustments to support your appointment, please let us know in advance.

What happens after the scan?

A radiologist will provide a written report for this procedure for the doctor or healthcare professional who requested it.

Your doctor or healthcare professional will be able to access this report electronically. They will then contact you to arrange a follow up appointment, to discuss the results and your ongoing care.

Any questions?

We will do our best to make your visit as comfortable and stress free as possible. If you have any questions, please contact our admin team on 01761 422250 or email us at radiology@sulishospital.com