

Preparing for your Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

For patients at the Rapid Diagnostic Centre

Read this resource to learn:

- how to prepare
- what to expect during an MRI
- what questions to ask your doctor
- where to get more information

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About magnetic resonance imaging

What is magnetic resonance imaging?

The MRI machine uses a very strong magnet and radio waves to create detailed pictures. It can create clear pictures of your organs and tissues.

During a breast MRI, the doctor will inject a dye (contrast) into a vein in your arm. You may hear your doctor call this dye, contrast.

Why do I need a breast MRI?

These pictures can help your doctor find out more about your breast change. An MRI can help detect cancer and other changes in the body.

If you are at high risk for breast cancer, you may need both an MRI and a mammogram.

If you need treatment, these pictures will also help your doctor decide what kind will be best for you.

Ask your doctor these questions:

- Why do I need an MRI?
- Do I need to book an appointment for my results?
- What will the MRI results show?
- What are the next steps? Do I need more tests?

Before your MRI

How can I prepare for MRI?

Tell the doctor who referred you if you:

- Are allergic to MRI dye (contrast). It is a gadolinium based contrast.
- Have any kidney problems, kidney disease, or are on dialysis.
- Are pregnant or breast feeding.
- Have any implanted medical devices or metal in your body.
This includes pacemakers, defibrillator, implanted medicine port (port-a-cath) or artificial joint.
- Have had any metal in your eye. This may be due to accident or an injury.
- Weigh more than 350 lbs.
- Are scared of being in small spaces (claustrophobic). Your doctor can give you some medicine. It will help you stay relaxed during your MRI.
The inside of the MRI scanner is 60 to 70 centimetres (about 24 to 28 inches) wide. This varies a little with different machines. If you take a relaxing medicine, you will need to arrange for someone to drive you home after the appointment.

Do this on **the morning** of the appointment:

- Take your regular medicines.
- Eat and drink normally.
- Wear comfortable clothes. Wear a 2-piece outfit that will be easy to take off and put on.

Try to leave any valuables or jewelry at home. You will need to remove all your jewelry before the MRI. This includes necklaces, body piercings and earrings.

What should I bring to the appointment?

- Your health card (OHIP card).
- Someone to drive you home (if you took relaxing medicine). It is not safe for you to drive after you take this medicine.

During the MRI

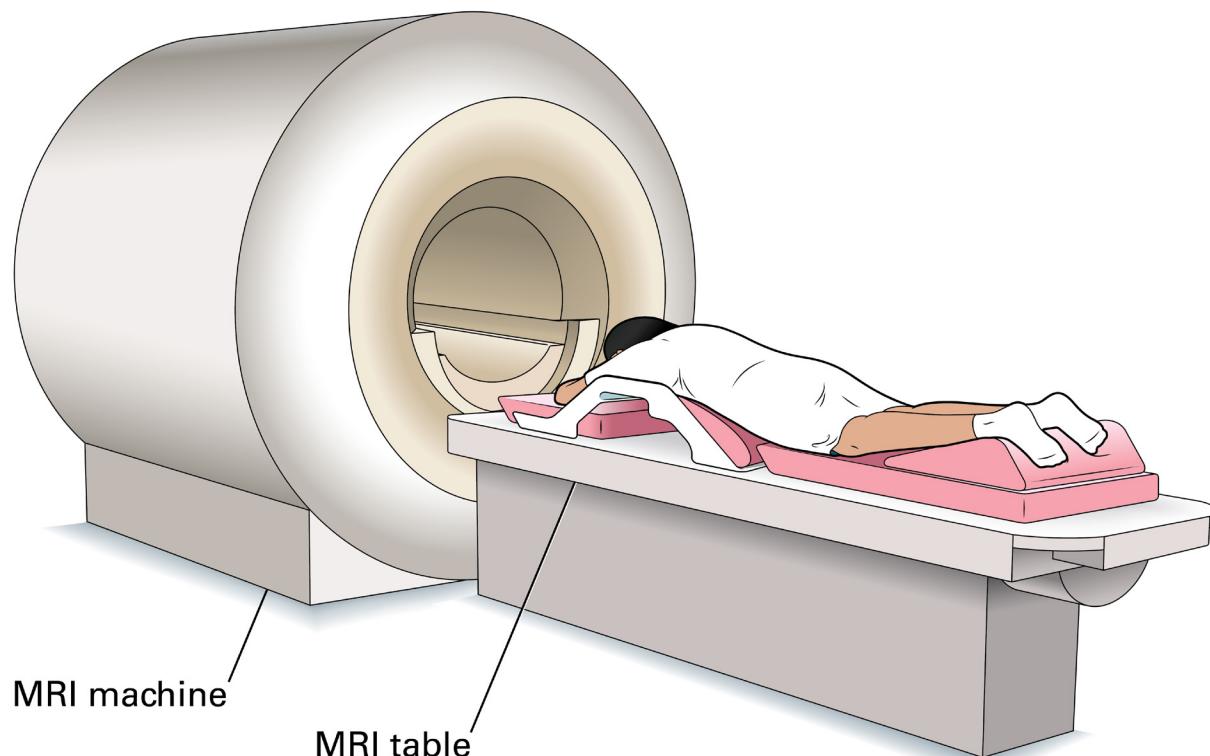
Who will do my breast MRI?

A technologist will perform the MRI. A breast radiologist is a doctor who is specializes in breast imaging.

What happens during a breast MRI?

1. Before you go into the MRI room, you will take off any:
 - jewelry (this includes piercings)
 - hearing aids
 - wigs
 - head pieces
 - glasses
2. You will be given something to cover your ears. The MRI is noisy.
3. You will go into the MRI room.
4. You will lie face down on the MRI table. Your breasts will be placed in a hole in the equipment.
5. You will be given an alarm button to hold in your hand. If you need to talk to the technologist, squeeze the alarm. They will come and check in with you.
6. The table you are lying on will slide into the machine. Your breasts will be in the centre of the MRI machine. This will help create the best pictures.

7. When you hear the tapping noise, it means the machine is taking pictures. The table may also shake or vibrate, this is normal. You may also feel warm during the MRI, this is normal.
8. Half way through the test, the dye will be injected into the vein in your arm. This will be done through an intravenous (IV) line. You may get feel a little coolness while the contrast is being injected. This is normal.



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Try to stay really still during the MRI or the pictures will be blurry.
Just stay relaxed and breathe gently in a normal way.

How long does an MRI take?

The breast MRI takes about 35 to 45 min. You will spend about 1 hour and 15 minutes in the MRI area.

After your breast MRI

What should I do to take care of myself after the MRI?

You do not need to do anything special after.

When will my results be ready?

Your nurse practitioner will let you know after the testing appointment.

They will give you an appointment card with the time and place for your 2nd appointment to talk about the test results. This appointment may be on the day of testing or it may be a few days later.

What will my results show?

An MRI will show whether your breast change is benign (not cancer) or cancer.

How can I deal with stress during this time?

Getting tested for breast changes can be stressful. It is normal to have feelings of anxiety and distress.

These feelings can change over time. It may not be the same while you are waiting to receive testing. It may change during testing. It may also change while you are waiting for your results. Each person's experience is different. There is no right or wrong way to feel about this. This experience may mean different things to different people.

Think about what has helped you get through stressful and uncertain times in the past.

Try these tips to see if they offer you some relief:

- ✓ Talk to a supportive partner, family member or friend.
- ✓ Do an activity to help keep your mind busy. Try something you enjoy. Focusing on something other than the tests and results may help. This can include reading, listening to music, going to a movie, seeking spiritual guidance or going for a walk.
- ✓ Read trusted health information. This may help if you prefer to be informed before testing and while you wait for your results. The Princess Margaret Patient and Family Library has many resources for patients and families. Find out more about the Library below.

If you would like to speak to someone about your concerns or feelings, please let your health care team know.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, go to:

- Patient and Family Library
Main atrium, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre
Phone: 416 946 4501 extension 5383
Website: www.library.theprincessmargaret.ca

The Patient and Family Library offers trusted information about:

- cancer
- cancer treatment and care
- support organizations and services
- much more

Here you will find computer stations, books, brochures, DVDs, audio books, electronic books and CDs. Trained staff and volunteers can help with your questions and help you to find the information and resources you need.



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