

Children's Outpatient Department

# Your child's MRI without an anaesthetic

Information for parents and carers



## MRI: Magnetic Resonance Imaging

MRI scans are used for a wide range of reasons. The scanner uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce a detailed image of the inside of the body.

The scanner is made up of a large tube which contains a powerful magnet. It is sometimes described as looking like a 'mint with a hole' or a donut.

## What are the benefits of my child having an MRI scan with no anaesthetic?

- Having the scan awake with no anaesthetic means your child can eat and drink as normal, both before and after the scan.
- Your child can have the scan in their own clothes (providing the garments do not contain any metal, as this affects the images produced).
- The scan may last between 30-90 minutes and you may be able to leave the hospital immediately afterwards.

There is a wealth of evidence which suggests a well prepared child will be able to cope with the having the MRI scan without any anaesthetic. The following pages will give you some ways to prepare your child for their scan.

## Preparing your child for their scan

- During the scan it is vital that your child stays still, so we can get clear images. Games such as 'statues' and 'sleeping lions' are fun ways to practice staying still. If your child has any difficulties with being in one position for long periods of time, please let us know at least two weeks before their MRI scan appointment.
- Explain what the scanner looks like, (see the picture on the front of this booklet) and the noise it will make, which is like a loud banging.
- Encourage your child to use the toilet before they go for their scan, this will make it easier for them to keep still.
- Be honest with your child – explain to them what will happen and try to answer any questions they might have. The Play Specialist, nurse or doctor will be able to answer any questions you are unsure about.
- Siemens (who make scanners) have created an interactive app, to help prepare children for an MRI scan. See page 6 for details.

For other ways to prepare your child for the scan, please speak to and/or arrange an appointment with a Play Specialist (please see page 5 for contact details).

## What to bring with you for the scan

Having the MRI scan without an anaesthetic means that your child can eat and drink as they would normally, before and after the scan. To encourage your child, choose a snack and drink to bring with them which they will look forward to having on the day. Your child can also bring a suitable teddy or comforter with them, as long as it does not contain metal.

During the scan your child will lie on a bed, which will slowly and gently glide into the scanner as it takes images of the inside of their body. During the scan your child may be able to wear headphones to reduce the noise of the scanner. CDs can be played through the headphones; this may help your child to relax, keep distracted and stay still. If they have any favourite music or story CDs please bring them with you on the day.

Encourage your child to wear comfortable clothing, making sure the chosen items do not contain metal (such as zips or rivets on jeans), sparkly gems or sequins.

## Play preparation sessions

Hospital Play Specialists provide therapeutic play for children of all ages, both individually and in groups. One role of the Play Specialist is to prepare children and young people before a procedure, such as a scan. Research shows that those children who are well prepared before their hospital experience tend to cope better and are less anxious.

The Play Specialist can help to:

- prepare your child for what is going to happen
- provide coping techniques
- provide ways for your child to deal with any worries and fears.

## How the Play Specialist will prepare your child

Children learn best through first-hand experiences, which allow them to build up their knowledge by feeling and experiencing things themselves.

- We have a mini MRI scanner, which plays the same sounds as the real machine and allows your child to act out the scan.
- We have a play tunnel so that your child can practice lying still and can get used to being inside a smaller space.
- We can show your child a photo story to talk them through the scan with the help of pictures.
- Depending on your child's age, we can teach them some relaxation techniques and coping mechanisms.

To book a play preparation session or for more information, please contact the Play Office:

Tel: **01865 231 249**

The Play Team are available Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 3.30pm.

The play preparation session will last approximately 30 minutes and we recommend that it is arranged for the day of the scan.

## What happens after the scan?

After your child's scan you will both be free to leave. Results are not normally given on this day, as they need to be seen by your child's referring doctor and the radiologists (specialist doctors who interpret scans and other images of the body).

If you have not had the results of your child's scan or been sent a follow-up appointment 2-3 weeks after the scan, please telephone your child's consultant's secretary.

## Further preparation you can do at home with your child

### **MRI Scan Experience App:**



**SIEMENS**

This app is a great way to help you, or your child, find out in advance what it's like to have an MRI scan.

The app has two links, one for adults and one for children, and helps to ease fears about coming for an MRI scan. You can experience a 360° virtual MRI scan (with realistic sounds); scan items; find out more about the steps from referral to results and have all your questions answered about the technology and process. Turn on your sound, lie down and lean back and move your tablet around to see what it's really like to have an MRI scan.

The app is available for Apple iPad and iPad mini, and Android tablets and phones. You can find it through the following link: <http://www.siemens.co.uk/en/index/mri-scan-virtual-experience-app-to-ease-fears.htm>



If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter,  
a document in Easy Read, another language, large print,  
Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473**  
or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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*Thanks to Siemens for the use of their images.*

