

MRI:

Pratt Regional Medical Center

What can you expect?



The MRI machine is very similar in appearance to a CT machine. The MRI has a wide opening and about twice as deep as that of a CT machine. You will lie down on a movable table that slides you through the opening. If you have ever experienced an MRI before, you will notice that our MRI is much wider and not as enclosed as the older MRI machines once were. Most people get through the exam without any difficulty. However, if you have a fear of confined spaces, or claustrophobia, you may need to request medicine from your ordering doctor to help you get through the exam. The medicine will make you feel sleepy and less anxious. If you take the medicine prescribed by your doctor, you will need to have a driver to get you to and from your MRI appointment.

The MRI machine is a very strong magnet. You will be required to remove any loose metal items prior to entering the examination room. It is strongly emphasized that tight fitted clothing made from a spandex type material not be worn during your MRI examination, as they contain invisible metallic microfibers. If it appears that your clothing contains a metallic substance, loose clothing will be provided for you to change into prior to the examination. Most surgically implanted metal devices are safe for MRI, except for certain pacemakers and other older devices. The MRI technologist will thoroughly review your MRI screening form prior to exam to determine if there are any contraindications to you having the exam.

During the MRI exam, the machine will produce the images with the use of radio waves. You will hear a loud repetitive thumping, or knocking noise, from the production of the radio waves. We will provide you with earplugs and headphones with music to reduce the loud noise. The exam is painless, and safer to your body than any other exam.

The MRI procedure can take anywhere from 20 minutes to more than an hour. It is very important that you hold still, so the movement does not blur the images.

Some exams require the use of contrast materials to enhance the images. If your exam is ordered with intravenous (IV) contrast, gadolinium will be injected through an intravenous (IV) line in your arm or hand. The IV contrast material for MRIs are less likely to cause an allergic reaction than the contrast for a CT scan. A MRI exam of your colon will require you to drink a contrast to enhance the appearance of your colon. The oral contrast you drink is the same used for a CT scan.

After the MRI examination is over, you may immediately resume your usual activities.