

Pediatric MRI – MRI exams ordered on infants and children are customized to the smaller body parts of the patient.

Reasons for this test

Your child's doctor may order a Pediatric MRI on any body part of an infant or child, as they would an adult. Frequently, these exams are performed under anesthesia due to the length of the exams and the need for the patient to be completely still throughout the exam. If anesthesia is required for the MRI, your child's doctor will inform you and give you instructions of when and where you and your child should report for the exam. The procedure will be handled through the Pediatric Surgery Unit and Childlife Services. If anesthesia is not required, you and your child will register at the imaging department 15 minutes prior to the appointment time. For further information, please call the MRI department directly.



Possible complications

Some MRI exams require an injection of intravenous MRI contrast. Allergic reaction from gadolinium dye is extremely rare (less than 1%). Your child's doctor will review a list of possible complications. These may include: rash, hives, or shortness of breath.

What to expect prior to your child's exam

- There is usually very little preparation for an MRI exam. Your child can take daily medications as they normally would, unless instructed otherwise. For those exams with dietary restrictions, you and your child will be notified of the requirements when scheduling.
- Typically you and your child will be asked to arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled procedural time. However, in some cases, you may be asked to arrive an hour or two hours early. You will be notified of your arrival time when scheduling.
- Your child should wear comfortable clothing that does not have metal fasteners or metallic designs. Otherwise, they will be asked to change into a hospital gown. A locker will be supplied to secure any belongings.
- If your child has any type of electronic implant, please bring the device card or other documents with the device information with you, as these devices must be documented to be sure they are safe before your child can go into the MRI room.

What to expect the day of your child's exam

- Your child will be registered and you will be asked to fill out the [MRI screening form](#). You can print this and fill it out ahead of time to bring with you.
- A health care professional will explain the test and answer any questions you or your child may have.
- If your child's exam requires contrast, an IV will be started so the contrast can be administered during the exam.

- Your child will be required to lie still during the actual scanning, as MRI is extremely sensitive to motion and any movement will cause the images to be blurry, resulting in repeated scanning and longer time in the magnet. Depending on the body part that is being examined, your child may be instructed to hold their breath for up to 30 seconds at a time.
- The magnet is permanently open on both ends. It is well lit and there is a fan for patient comfort. The part of the body being scanned will be placed in the middle of the magnet. There is a two-way intercom system for communication between your child and technologist.
- During the actual imaging, your child will hear a loud intermittent banging noise. Your child will be provided with earplugs or headphones to minimize the noise during the procedure.
- If your child is claustrophobic, their doctor may prescribe an oral medication for your child to take for the MRI appointment.
- The technologist will also provide your child with an alarm button to alert the technologist of any discomfort they may experience at any point during the MRI exam.

What to expect after your exam

- If a contrast injection is performed, the IV is removed from the arm before your child goes home.
- If your child receives anesthesia, they will be taken to the recovery room following the procedure and kept until they are fully awake and alert. They will be under the care of the Pediatric Surgery Unit and Childlife Services throughout the procedure from the time they are registered until they are released to go home.

How long will it take?

The exam is 45 minutes to one hour per body part. If your child is given contrast it will add an additional 15-20 minutes. Total time you and your child will be at the health care facility will vary depending on the exam ordered and whether or not anesthesia is required.