



Imaging Patient Education

What you should know about your *Breast MRI exam*:

Purpose:

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses radio waves and a strong magnetic field to provide clear and detailed images of internal organs and tissues. Research has demonstrated that MRI can detect some small breast lesions sometimes not seen by mammography. MRI can also help find breast cancer in women with breast implants and younger women with dense breast tissue, both of which are difficult to image using traditional mammography.

MRI of the breast is not a replacement for mammography or ultrasound imaging but another exam used for detecting and staging breast cancer and other breast abnormalities.

Preparation:

- You will be asked to complete a medical history and screening form which will be reviewed with you by a staff member.
- You will be asked to remove anything that might decrease the quality of the MR images including hairpins, jewelry, eyeglasses, hearing aids and any removable dentures.
- Tooth fillings usually are not affected by the magnetic field but they may blur the image quality when scanning the brain.
- Since the MRI scanner is a very large magnet, it is important for us to know of any metal implants/devices you may have in your body.
- It is important to bring along any implant and/or medical device cards at the time of your appointment (example heart stents, eye/ear implants etc.)
- We will use these cards to verify the safety of your implant.
- If you do not have information about your implant it may cause a significant delay or cancellation in your exam.
- Be aware there are some implants, such as pacemakers, that are not MRI safe.
- If you have an implant or medical device that is thought to be unsafe for MRI, we will not be able to perform your exam. Your doctor may recommend a different exam.
- It is important to tell a staff member if you are pregnant.
- While MRI does not use any ionizing radiation (x-rays), MRI must be used cautiously in the early stages of pregnancy.
- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and to wear a gown and/or scrub pants during the exam.
- Your valuables will be locked in a locker during your exam.

Procedure - What to Expect:

- We will verify your name, date of birth, and exam you will be having performed.
- Once we determine you may safely enter the magnet, you will be taken to the scanning room.
- You will be asked to lie on a padded table.
- Cushions will be provided for your comfort.
- A special piece of equipment called a coil will be placed over the area to be scanned.
- You will hear different sounds during your exam which is normal.
- You will be required to wear ear plugs or headphones to listen to music for your exam.
- A call bell will be placed in your hand to alert the technologist if you need assistance during the exam.
- You will be instructed to hold very still.
- Movement during the exam may cause blurred images that may need to be repeated.
- Even though the technologist will be in another room during the scan, he/she will be able to hear you and speak to you.
- Depending on the exam your physician may order a contrast agent to brighten the image quality.
- A small needle is placed in an arm or hand vein that connects to plastic tubing. The contrast is then injected during the procedure.
- Additional images will be taken after the injection.
- The average exam lasts approximately 30 minutes.

After the Test:

- If you received contrast the needle will be removed prior to leaving the scanning room.
- You may change into your clothing and gather your valuables.
- A staff member will escort you back to the reception area.
- Your exam will be evaluated by a radiologist and the report will be sent to your physician.

If you have questions or need additional information,
please call Gettysburg Hospital's MRI Department:
(717) 338-3284