What you should know about your Sedated Pediatric 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.

An MRI scan may be recommended in order to detect a wide range of abnormalities or diseases in any part of your child’s body. Among the more common reasons for requesting an MRI scan are spinal cord abnormalities, Arnold Chiari, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, seizures, hydrocephalus, head injuries and developmental delay.

Because the patient must remain completely still during an MRI exam, conscious sedation may be necessary when performing pediatric MRI. The purpose of the sedation is to assure patient safety and comfort, reduce parental anxiety and stress and to achieve high quality outcomes with diagnostic imaging. The referring physician will make scheduling arrangements with the nursing staff and physician when sedation is required.

**Preparation:**
- Your child will be scheduled for the MRI study to include sedation.
- The imaging nursing staff will contact you one week prior to the MRI study to obtain medical history.
- You will receive in the mail confirmation of your appointment along with instructions from the imaging nursing department to explain the MRI study with sedation.
- The nursing staff will review the guidelines for food and liquids prior to the MRI study.
- Your child should wear loose clothing with no metal snaps/buckles.
- Bring an extra diaper or spare clothes (if new to potty training).
- Upon arrival the day of your appointment you will be asked to complete a medical history and screening form on your child which will be reviewed by an MRI staff member.
- Your child will be asked to remove anything that might decrease the quality of the MR images including hairpins, jewelry, eyeglasses, hearing aids and any removable dental work.
- Tooth fillings usually are not affected by the magnetic field but they may blur image quality of the brain.
- Since the MRI scanner is a very large magnet, it is important for us to know of any metal implants/devices that your child may have in his/her body.
- It is important to bring along any implant and/or medical device cards at the time of the appointment (example heart stents, eye/ear implants, etc.)
- We will use these cards to verify the safety of your child’s implant.
- If you do not have information about your child’s implant this may cause a significant delay in the exam.
Sedated Pediatric continued

- Be aware there are some implants, such as pacemakers, that are not MRI safe.
- If your child has an implant or medical device that is thought to be unsafe, we will not be able to perform the exam. Your doctor may recommend a different exam.
- An IV will be started before the procedure, in order to give sedation.
- The parent/guardian will accompany the child back to the MRI suite and stay with the child until they fall asleep.
- The parent/guardian will then be escorted to a waiting room.
- A pediatrician and nurse will be with the child at all times.
- The parent/guardian will be with the child during recovery time.

Procedure: What to Expect

- You will verify your child’s name, date of birth and exam that will be performed.
- Your child may bring along to their appointment a favorite stuffed animal or blanket. The stuffed animal must be MRI safe before allowing it into the room. Please make sure the stuffed animal does not have a music box or any batteries inside.
- Once your child is MRI safe we will precede with the sedation procedure.
- A special piece of equipment called a coil will be placed over the area to be scanned.
- Your child will be given ear plugs or headphones for ear protection during the scan.
- Depending on the exam your doctor has ordered, some patients will be given a contrast agent to brighten the image quality.
- Additional images will be taken to view the contrast agent.
- The average exam lasts approximately 45 minutes.

After the Test:

- Your child must be able to eat and drink before discharge. We will supply a juice box/small snack item.
- Feel free to bring along the child’s favorite snack if you wish.
- Bottle-fed children will need a bottle of milk or juice.
- Once the sedation team feels your child is ready for discharge, you will be allowed to go home.
- Your child’s exam will be evaluated by a radiologist and the report will be sent to your child’s physician.

Imaging Department Phone Number:  
(717) 851-4624