

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# MRI

## or Magnetic Resonance Imaging

An **MRI** or **Magnetic Resonance Imaging** test will help your child's doctor see what's going on inside your child's body. MRI sees right through bone and shows soft tissue, too. MRI pictures have a lot of detail, and help doctors find and treat problems early. MRIs help diagnose disorders of the brain, nervous system, heart, bones, organs and several cancers. MRIs also help doctors see if treatments are working.

An MRI is not an x ray. It uses magnets, radio waves and a computer to take flat or 3-D pictures. MRIs are painless and have no known side effects.

### Before the test

- Your child's doctor will tell you why your child needs an MRI. If you don't understand, ask.

Date of my child's MRI: \_\_\_\_\_

Time to get to the place where the test will be done: \_\_\_\_\_

- Sometimes, we give children medicine to help them relax and stay still during the test (**sedation** or **general anesthesia**). Sometimes, to see more detail on the MRI, we give children medicine called **contrast**. **Your child should not eat or drink before the MRI.**

yes  no **Your child is under 6 months old.**

4 hours before the test, \_\_\_\_\_ (time), stop giving your child breast milk, formula, and food.

2 hours before the test, \_\_\_\_\_ (time) stop giving your baby liquids, like water, juice, and Pedialyte.

yes  no **Your child is 6 months old or older.**

6 hours before the test, \_\_\_\_\_ (time), stop giving your child breast milk, formula, and food.

3 hours before the test, \_\_\_\_\_ (time) stop giving your child liquids, like water, juice, and Pedialyte.

yes  no Your child should take his or her usual medicines before the test.

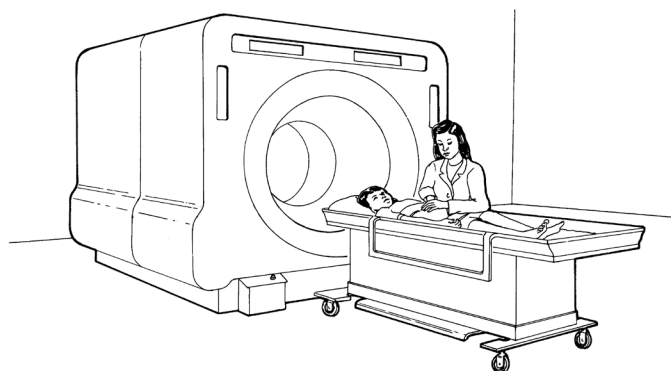
yes  no Ask someone you trust to pick up or care for your other children while this child is having the MRI. We do not offer child care at the hospital.

## Getting ready for the test

- If your child is old enough to understand, explain what will happen. Do this when you think the time is right. Children do best when they are told what they will see, feel and hear during the test. The room will be a little dark. The MRI scanner is very big, but it will not hurt your child. Your child will lay on a table, which will slide into the tunnel of the scanner. Your child will hear loud clicks and other noises during the test. It may be a little scary, but there will be people close by watching and making sure everything is OK. Your child will have to lie very still during the test.

- Your child may bring a favorite stuffed animal or blanket to hold during the test. Your child may bring music to listen to during the test, if awake.

- To get a clear picture, your child must stay very still during the MRI



**Your child will slide  
into the middle of the scanner.**

test. This is often hard for children to do. Your child may be given medicine to make him or her drowsy (**sedation**) or sleep through the test (**general anesthesia**).

- If you want to know more, ask your nurse or doctor for the handouts:
  - **Medicine Before a Test or Procedure** (#300)
  - **IVs** (#107)
  
- Metal can affect the test.
  - Dress your child in loose, comfortable clothes that do not have any metal pieces.
  - There should be no metal objects on your child or the stuffed animal.
  - If you go into the scanning room with your child, you will also have to make sure there is no metal on your clothes.
  - Some medical devices, like shunts, rods, and nerve stimulators are made of metal. If your child has any medical device in his or her body, tell the person doing the test (**technologist**) before your child has an MRI.
  
- If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, do not go into the MRI room. We don't think it will hurt the unborn baby, but we don't want to take any chances.
  
- Someone will ask you to sign a consent form to give permission for your child to have an MRI.
  
- If your child has ever had a **kidney problem or kidney disease**, please tell your nurse, doctor, and the person doing the MRI on your child.
  
- If your child has ever had a **reaction or allergy to a contrast agent** used for any medical test, such as a CT scan, an MRI, or an IVP test, please tell your nurse, doctor, and the person doing the MRI on your child.

## During the test

- If your child is given medicine to make him or her sleep through the test (**general anesthesia**), a doctor (**anesthesiologist**) will talk to you before the test, and answer your questions. You will stay in the waiting room until your child's test is done.
  
- Medicine, called **contrast**, may be put through the IV to make the picture more clear. This may make your child feel warm, flushed, and have a salty taste in his or her mouth.

- The room will be a little dark.
- Your child will lie on the scanning table with his or her head placed in a cradle.
- Seat belt like straps will hold your child in place and remind him or her to stay still.
- The scanning table will slide into the middle of the scanner.
- If your child is awake, he or she will hear loud clicks and other noises during the test.
- When the test is done, the scanning table will slide out of the tunnel, and your child can come off the table.
- The test is painless and usually lasts between one to two hours.

## After the test

- The medicine (**anesthesia**) may make your child may be sleepy and irritable right after the test. Your child could fall and hurt him or herself. Watch your child closely.

yes  no Your child can go home when he or she is awake enough to drink clear fluids and keep them down. If sleepy, your child could choke when eating. Watch your child closely.

- If you want to know more, ask your nurse or doctor for the handout.  
— **Home Care After Sedation (#43)**.

## Getting the results

- A doctor trained to look at the MRI, the radiologist, will report the findings to your child's doctor.
- Your child's doctor will talk to you about the results and will suggest treatment based on the findings.

## Now that you've read this

- Tell your nurse or doctor how you will get your child ready for the MRI.  
(Check when done.)
- Tell your child's nurse or doctor if your child has or ever had a kidney problem or kidney disease. (Check when done.)
- Tell your child's nurse or doctor if your child has ever had a reaction or allergy to a contrast agent used for any test, such as a CT scan, an MRI, or an IVP test. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

- call your child's doctor or
- call \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-933-1400  
866-933-6459  
[www.phoenixchildrens.org](http://www.phoenixchildrens.org)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/theemilycenter](https://www.facebook.com/theemilycenter)  
Twitter: [@emilycenter](https://twitter.com/emilycenter)  
Pinterest: [pinterest.com/emilycenter](https://www.pinterest.com/emilycenter)

### Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

September 15, 2014 • DRAFT to family review  
#94 • Written by Joyce Niemiec, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain

## MRI or Magnetic Resonance Imaging

Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db

### Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center  
Health Education Specialist  
Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

**Thank you for helping us!**