

MRI: Enterography Scan

What to expect and how to prepare

This handout for patients having an MRI enterography scan explains what to expect and how to prepare.

What is MRI enterography?

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a way to take pictures of your internal organs and tissues. It uses radio waves and a strong magnet to provide clear and detailed pictures.

An *MRI enterography* scan helps us see detailed pictures of your small intestine. This scan can show areas of *inflammation* (swelling and irritation), bleeding, and other problems.

MRI enterography will help your healthcare provider decide which treatment is best for your medical condition.

How does the scan work?

Most MRIs involve taking 2 or more sets of pictures. Each set lasts 2 to 15 minutes and will show a different part of your small intestine and the tissues around it. The full scan will take 30 to 40 minutes.

For Your Safety

We need to know about certain **health conditions** before giving you an MRI scan. Please tell us if you:

- Have any problems with your liver or kidneys
- Need a liver or kidney transplant
- Are on dialysis
- Have allergies to any drugs or contrast material
- Are taking anticoagulant (blood-thinning) drugs
- Have had any surgeries
- Are pregnant or may be pregnant

We also need to know if you have any **metal in or on your body** before we give you an MRI scan.



An MRI scanner uses radio waves and a strong magnet to create detailed images.

The MRI magnets will pull on any *ferromagnetic* object, such as iron and some other metals. Please tell MRI staff if you have:

- Aneurysm clips, heart pacemaker, artificial heart valve, implanted port, infusion catheter (such as Port-o-cath, Infusaport, or Lifeport), intrauterine device (IUD), prosthetic hip, plates, clips, pins, or screws, surgical staples, or any other implanted metal object

Most times, surgical staples, clips, plates, pins, and screws are not a risk during MRI if they have been in place for more than 4 to 6 weeks. If it is possible that metal fragments in your body will cause problems with the MRI, an X-ray may be done first to check for them.

- Tattoos or permanent eyeliner
- Medicine patches
- A bullet or shrapnel in your body
- Ever worked with metal
- Tooth fillings or braces

Dental work is not usually affected by the MRI, but fillings and braces may affect pictures of the face or brain.

Please also **remove any other items that might contain metal** and affect your MRI pictures. These include:

- Hairpins
- Jewelry
- Glasses, hearing aids, and any removable dental work

What should I expect?

Before Your Scan

- When you arrive at the Radiology department, the MRI technologist will explain the scan to you. You will then change into a hospital gown.
- The technologist or a medical assistant will give you 2 bottles of VoLumen *contrast* (barium sulfate suspension). Each bottle contains 450 ml of barium. You will drink both bottles of VoLumen within 1 hour, for a total of 900 ml of barium.
- You will also receive another type of contrast, called *gadolinium*, during the MRI scan. This will be given through an *intravenous* (IV) tube placed in one of your arm veins. The technologist will place the IV before the scan begins.
- After you finish both bottles of VoLumen, the Radiology nurse may inject *glucagon* into one of your muscles. This medicine helps slow bowel movements. This lessens any motion that might cause problems with the MRI scan.

During the Scan

- You will need to lie very still on your back on a sliding table. The technologist will help get you into position.
- There will be a piece of equipment called a *torso coil* placed on your abdomen.
- The technologist will give you breathing instructions. Please closely follow these instructions for the best imaging results.
- The technologist will slide the table inside the MRI unit and then leave the room to take the MRI pictures.
- You will be able to talk with the technologist at any time through an intercom.
- When it is time for you to receive the injection of gadolinium, the Radiology nurse may first give you another IV dose of glucagon. You will then receive the gadolinium injection. After this, the technologist will take more pictures.
- The scan will take about 40 minutes. After the scan is done, the torso coil will be removed.

After the Scan

- Drink plenty of fluids the rest of the day to help flush the contrast out of your body. Try to drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid.

What will I feel during the MRI?

- MRI is not painful.
- Some patients may feel confined or uneasy (*claustrophobic*) when they are inside the MRI unit. Please tell the doctor who referred you for the MRI if you are claustrophobic. Your doctor may give you medicine to help you relax during your scan.
- You may feel warmth in the area where the pictures are taken. This is normal. If it bothers you, please tell the MRI technologist.
- You will hear loud tapping or knocking noises during the scan. We will provide earplugs or headphones with music to help block some of these sounds.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

- UWMC Imaging Services: 206.598.6200
- HMC Imaging Services: 206.744.3105

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist who specializes in MRI will review and interpret your MRI images. The radiologist will not talk with you about the results, but will send a report to your primary care provider or referring doctor. This doctor will give you the results.