SO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE AN MRI

Your doctor has decided that you need to have an MRI. An MRI will help the doctor to see parts of the inside of your body that he can't see with an x-ray. An x-ray only shows pictures of your bones. An MRI can show pictures of everything else, like your muscles, heart or brain. This handout will answer some questions that you may have and help you to learn about the MRI.

What is an MRI?

MRI stands for magnetic resonance imaging. An MRI takes pictures using a large, very strong magnet and a computer which shows the pictures that are being taken on its screen. The magnet is in a large machine that looks like a big box with a hole in the middle. There is

What will I have to do?

Your job will be to stay still while the MRI technologist is taking the pictures. You will lie on the table, either feet or head first, depending on what part of your body the doctor needs pictures of. You will be given some ear plugs to put in your ears, because you'll hear a loud knocking sound during the MRI. This sound means the
a table, which slides in and out of the hole. You will be lying on the table.

**How long will an MRI take?**

It can last for 15 minutes (about as long as half a cartoon show) to 1 hour and a half (about as long as a Disney movie).

**Will I have to take any medicine?**

Some patients will get an IV and be given a medicine called “contrast.” It may feel a little cold going in and will help the pictures to look a little clearer.

**What is an IV?**

IV means “inside the vein.” An IV looks like a straw that gives your body a drink of medicine and is connected to a bag and a tube that goes from the bag to your arm. It is a quick way for you to get the contrast.

**Will it hurt?**

No, it will not hurt. You may feel a little uncomfortable because you will need to lie very still while the pictures are being taken. The MRI technologist may put a safety belt or brace around your body to help you to remember to stay still. You will stay on the table until the MRI is over. This is all that you have to do. After the MRI, you may need to stay on the table a little longer while the technologist looks at the pictures to make sure they came out ok. If they look good, then you can get off the table and leave the MRI room.

**Will I have to change clothes?**

You may be asked to put on a hospital gown. You will be asked to take off anything that has metal in it. This includes watches, rings, earrings, necklaces, glasses and belts.

**What if I wear braces?**

Braces will not hurt the machine or mess up the pictures. If you are having a MRI of your head, then the pictures may look a little blurry, but this is ok. If you are still wondering about it, you can talk with your doctor.
pictures are being taken.

**Will someone be with me during my MRI?**

You will be able to have someone in the room with you while you are having the MRI, or they can stay in the waiting room until you are finished. It is up to you.

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**CAREGIVER TIPS...**

Your child’s doctor has ordered a MRI, which can help to detect various diseases, injuries and disorders. The MRI can also assist the doctor in monitoring the progress of your child’s illness and the treatment he or she is receiving. Below are some tips to help your child to be ready for the MRI.

**How to prepare your child at home or in the hospital:**

- Ask if your child can see the MRI machine and room beforehand
- Follow any instructions that you have received regarding eating or taking any medications prior to the procedure
- Make sure your child is not wearing any metal objects including jewelry, glasses and clothing with zippers, snaps or any kind of metal fastener
- Have your child go to the bathroom before leaving the room so that he or she won’t be uncomfortable during the MRI
- Discuss the MRI with your child to make sure that he or she understands what will be happening
- Have your child ready and on time so that you won’t keep others waiting
- Remind them to be very still during the MRI
Questions to ask the doctor:

Will my child have to take any medication or be sedated?
Will my child have to be given an injection?
Can we use EMLA cream?
Will he or she be allowed to eat before or after the procedure?
How long will the MRI take?
How long will I have to wait to get the results?
Where do I go to check in?
What are the risks involved?
Can I be with my child during the procedure?
What will I have to wear?
Will I see you the day of the MRI?

We, at the Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children, hope that you find the information and tips provided helpful in preparing your child to have an MRI. If you have any questions or concerns, you can ask your doctor, nurse, child life specialist or call the Radiology department at 984-2645 for more information.

Remember that your child will have to stay very still during the MRI. The MRI technologist may ask your child not to talk when the pictures are being taken. Here are some things that your child can do during the MRI. You and your child may want to practice these at home before coming to the hospital.

- Count to 100
- Pretend you’re somewhere else
- Say the alphabet
- Sing a song
- Make up a story
- Think about some of your favorite things (friends, food, and sports)