

Magnetic Resonance Imaging Scans Frequently Asked Questions

MRI Scans FAQ

What is an MRI?

An MRI is a medical procedure that uses magnetic fields and radio waves to create images of the body's interior without ionizing radiation (unlike X-rays or CT scans). MRIs are safe, painless, and usually last 20-90 minutes.

Is the MRI scan safe for me and my baby?

MRI scans are generally considered safe during pregnancy. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American College of Radiology (ACR) have stated that pregnant people can have an MRI done, during any trimester. Unlike X-rays or CT scans, MRIs do not use ionizing radiation that could potentially harm the fetus. Instead, they use magnetic fields and radio waves to create detailed images. There have been no ill effects reported but it is possible that harmful effects could be recognized in the future.

Does having an MRI increase the risk of birth defects?

Every pregnancy has a 3-5% chance of birth defects, known as the background risk. A study of over 1,700 pregnancies exposed to MRI in the first trimester found no increased risk of birth defects.

While the MRI scanner produces heat, it weakens before reaching the baby. The loud sounds from the MRI have not been shown to cause fetal hearing damage based on small studies.

Will my MRI use any contrast or sedation?

For our study, the MRI scans will not use any contrast or sedation.

How long is the MRI?

The MRI appointment can last 1-2 hours long. The MRI scan is not one long scan, we do quick 5-minute scan, stop and then we check in to see how you're doing, do another few minutes, stop-check-in, and so on and so forth.

Will I or my baby need to be sedated for the MRI?

No, you and your baby will not be sedated. We will schedule extra time before the MRI so that your baby is naturally sleeping when we do the MRI scan.

Will I get results from the MRI?

Although there will be no results from the MRI scans, meaning it will not be read by a radiologist, you may request a copy of an image from the scan. However, if we suspect any reasons that you may need to visit a doctor, we will let you know.