

WHAT IS AN MRI?

MRI BASICS

An MRI is a way to take a picture of the inside of your body using a large, round camera that your body will fit inside of. The picture will help your doctor learn more about your body's health.

STEP ONE

MRI machines have magnets inside of their cameras that help to take the pictures. It is important that you do not have any metal on or in your body. You may need to change into new pajamas that do not have any metal.



STEP TWO

You will lay down on the MRI machine's bed. Your nurse will place a seat belt over your belly, headphones over your ears, and a helmet over your head. The helmet does not touch you. There is a mirror inside to help you see around the room.



STEP THREE

While you are laying down, the bed will move into the opening in the MRI machine's camera. Nothing will touch you. It is important that you keep your body very still.



STEP FOUR

While you are inside the MRI machine's camera, you will hear weird noises. This is the sound of the camera taking pictures. [Here](#) is what an MRI machine sounds like.



STEP FIVE

Some pictures need to be taken with contrast. Contrast is fluid that is put in your body through an IV. (Learn more about IVs [here](#).) The fluid glows under the camera and helps your doctor see different parts of your body.



STEP SIX

If your picture needs contrast, the bed will move you out of the camera and your nurse will put the contrast through your IV. Your body might start to feel warm, even like you peed yourself, but don't worry, you won't actually pee!



STEP SEVEN

The bed will move back into the MRI machine for more pictures. Once the pictures are taken, the bed will move out again and your nurse will take the helmet away and the headphones off of your ears. You can sit up and get off the bed.



COPING

MRI pictures can be quite long, lasting up to 2 hours. While having an MRI can be stressful, there are many ways to make the process easier.

Relax your body.

While it may seem difficult, keeping your body relaxed will help you feel calmer and less nervous. When you start to feel worried, try to:

- Take deep breaths, counting to 5 as you inhale and then counting to 5 as you exhale
- Listen to music
- Imagine how your body feels when you are relaxed
 - Where are you?
 - What are you doing?
 - Who are you with?

Talk to your caregiver(s), doctors, and nurses.

Tell them what would make you the most comfortable and ask questions if you don't understand something. Make sure to ask how long your pictures will take.