



Western Washington Medical Group

What to Expect: MRI

What is an MRI?

- MRI takes pictures of the body using strong magnetic fields and radiofrequency pulses. No ionizing radiation is used.

What will I need to know when scheduling?

- You will be asked about any metal you may have inside or outside of your body. This includes implants, permanent jewelry, or metal from accidents.
- If your provider has ordered an exam with contrast, you will be asked about allergies.
- The scheduler will ask if you have had any imaging of the same body part. These images will be requested and compared to your new images.

How should I prepare?

- You will be changed into metal-free, cotton clothing for your exam.
- You should remove all jewelry and hairpins prior to your exam.
- Leave valuables and personal belongings at home. Phones, keys, and wallets can be locked in a locker or your dressing room. They cannot be taken into the MRI room.

What if I'm claustrophobic?

- Your doctor may prescribe medication for you to take just prior to your exam.
- If you will be taking medication, you should arrive early to complete your paperwork *prior* to taking your prescription.
- You must have a driver with you.

What happens during the exam?

- Because the radiofrequency pulses are loud, the technologist will offer you headphones and/or earplugs for your scan. Most exams allow you to listen to music.
- The technologist will communicate instructions and check-in with you via the headphones throughout the exam.
- You will be asked to lay as still as possible so the scanner can obtain clear pictures.
- The technologist will give you a "squeeze ball" to hold during the scan. You can use this to notify the technologist if you wish to end the scan early or exit the scanner.

What happens after the exam?

- A radiologist will review your images and create a report to be sent to your provider. In most cases, a report will be dictated by the end of the day.
- Your referring provider will either request you schedule an appointment or they may contact you by phone to discuss your results.