

OPEN MRI

Open magnetic resonance imaging (Open MRI) is a specialized MRI unit with a wide-open design to accommodate patients with athletic or large body types, and to alleviate anxious or claustrophobic patients due to its unobtrusive open airy design

Traditional MRI units have small “tunnel-like” openings designed to achieve high-field strengths necessary to enhance picture quality and achieves shorter exam times. However, over the years there has been an ongoing stigma surrounding these “closed-bore” MRI units that elicits fear, agitation, and stress in some patients. Because of the small openings used for imaging, many young patients and those who are claustrophobic or large-framed have had difficulty completing their exams due to discomfort or anxiety.

Open MRI units were introduced as a solution to this problem. Initial Open MRI technology, however, lacked the level of image quality and accuracy to which doctors and patients had grown accustomed. Although these initial Open MRI units had larger openings, their field strength had to be markedly reduced, which created longer scan times and lower quality images.

Today, technologically advanced “high-field” Open MRI units now provide patients and physicians the best of both worlds –superior field strength with a wide opening designed for patient comfort. This advanced technology allows for faster and higher quality imaging of all parts of the body. In addition to better imaging, the “high-field” Open MRI also maximizes the comfort level for patients, especially:

- Children
- Claustrophobic
- Obese
- Seniors

The spacious and airy design of our unique machines helps to ease claustrophobia and enhance the patient experience. Any patient can be scanned with a family member or friend by his or her side.

PREPARATION

There are generally no food restrictions for your MRI; however, you should avoid coffee and other caffeinated beverages since you will be required to lie still for several minutes at a time.

Note: Any woman who is pregnant, or thinks she might be, should let her doctor know before proceeding with the exam.

Concord Imaging Center

Breast Imaging Suite

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CIC Pillsbury

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CIC Horseshoe Pond

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Depending on the type of exam you will be having, you may receive an injection of intravenous (IV) contrast material. If you are allergic to any medications, had a previous allergic reaction to an IV injection, are diabetic or have renal disease, please tell your doctor, the radiologist or the technologist.

While MRI is considered safe for most people, there are some reasons not to have the exam. Before proceeding with your exam, for your safety, please inform your doctor or the technologist if you have:

- Aneurysm clips
- Cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator
- Artificial heart valve
- Previous gunshot wound
- Metal plate, pin or other metallic implant
- Intrauterine device such as a Copper-7 IUD
- Ever been a metal worker
- Permanent tattoo or eyeliner

On the day of your exam, it is best to wear loose, comfortable clothing such as a sweatshirt and sweatpants. Make-up and hairsprays should be avoided. Avoid clothing with metallic objects such as zippers, snaps or grommets, as metal may interfere with the imaging process. If you must wear clothing with metal, hospital gowns will be provided.

THE PROCEDURE

Although an advanced imaging technique, the exam itself is relatively easy and comfortable for most people. Before your test, you will be asked to remove all metallic objects such as eyeglasses, jewelry, wristwatches, etc.

You will lie on a cushioned table and a device called an imaging coil will be placed over or under you. When you are comfortably positioned, the table will move into the magnet. As the exam begins you will hear a variety of muffled thumping or clicking sounds. This is normal during the exam and should not be cause for concern. To ensure the best possible exam, it is important that you lie still during the procedure and pay careful attention to the instructions given by the technologist. From the control area, the technologist will stay in constant contact with you, both visually and through an intercom.

Exams take anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes depending on your particular MRI study.

AFTER THE EXAM

A radiologist, a physician with expertise in interpreting medical imaging, will analyze the images and send a report to your physician. Your doctor will discuss these results with you and explain what they mean in relation to your health.

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