Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Having a MRI Scan - Children

Version number: **17**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Having an MRI Scan

Patient information

Child Health Department

The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:

https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets or scan the QR code.

- Author ID: HS
- Leaflet Ref: CH 042
- Version: 17
- Leaflet title: Having an MRI Scan
- Last review: March 2021
- Expiry Date: March 2023

Having an MRI Scan

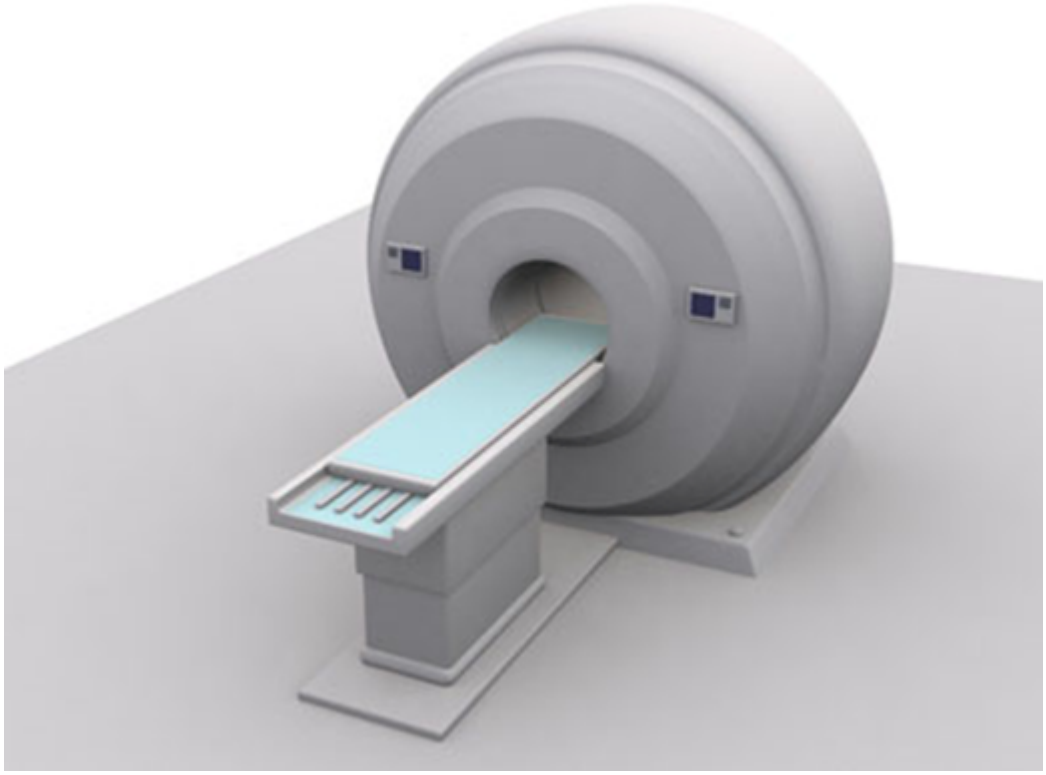
Your child will be having an MRI scan. This leaflet provides some information about the scan and the preparation we make for it.

Sedation

MRI scans are noisy and children must lie still. Depending on their age and understanding, we will usually sedate them. This means that we must admit them to the ward, and give them a medicine which makes them sleepy. We will also put a cannula (small piece of plastic) into one of their veins in case we need to top up their sedation.

Before giving the sedation, your child will be assessed to make sure they are well. We wish to know about any current medical problems and any allergies. Please give any normal medicines as you would on a normal day. It is helpful to us if you bring a full list of medicines that your child takes.

Because of the sedation we are giving your child, we don’t want your child to vomit. Please don’t give your child anything to eat for 2 hours before you come in (this usually means an early breakfast). Children can drink water up to the time the sedation medicine is given. For babies, feeds can be given up to the time of the sedation medicine being given.



The Scan

The MRI scanner uses a very large magnet to get pictures of parts of your body. The magnet will have a very bad effect on metal objects (they fly across the room, and get very hot). If your child has any metal jewellery or clothing, they should be taken off. This includes metal poppers on babies' vests. You will be asked about any operations that could have put metal objects in (broken bones can be repaired with metal rods).

To make your child comfortable, we would encourage them to bring their favorite toy. This should not have any metal parts.

In the scan, your child will have headphones on. We can play music through this, and you may bring a CD for this purpose.

Going Home

After the scan, your child will return to the ward. We will allow them to wake up there, whilst monitoring them. They will usually be sleepy for about 2 hours after. Once your child has had something to eat or drink, we will allow them home. It is better to have 2 adults to take a child home. This is especially true when taking a child home in a car. One adult is then able to drive, the other to keep an eye on the child in the car seat.

Getting the Result of the Scan

It will take at least some days for scans to have a full report made. You should have an outstanding appointment with your Consultant. If you haven’t, or this appointment is a long time in the future, tell us before you go home, and we will arrange it for you.

Please Feel Free to Ask

If you have any questions or queries which we have not covered in this leaflet, the staff will be pleased to answer your questions as clearly and honestly as they can.

Rainbow Ward, Telephone: 01942 778762 or 778763, Ward open 24 hours.

Please note that we can only give specific advice where we have recently been involved in the care of a child.



Version number: **17**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

All rights reserved © 2026
WWL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust