



Pituitary MRI: What to Expect

Your child is scheduled to have a pituitary MRI. In this handout, you will learn what to expect before, during and after the MRI. You will also learn how to prepare for the MRI.

WHAT IS A PITUITARY MRI?

A **pituitary MRI** (magnetic resonance imaging) is an imaging test that makes pictures of the **pituitary gland** (small gland in the brain that controls hormones and other glands in the body) and surrounding areas in the brain.

HOW CAN I PREPARE MY CHILD FOR THE PITUITARY MRI?

Eating and drinking

- Have your child drink lots of water before the MRI. If your child is going to have **sedation** (medication to help him relax before the MRI), he will need to follow **NPO instructions** (instructions for eating and drinking before the MRI). The care team will give you NPO instructions, if needed.

What to wear

- Dress your child in loose, comfortable clothes that are easy to take on and off.
- Remove jewelry, metal or piercings before the MRI. If your child has metal in his body that cannot be removed easily (such as braces or a medical device), tell the care team before you schedule the MRI. Braces will usually need to be removed before the MRI.

About the MRI

- The MRI takes about half an hour to an hour (30-60 minutes). It does not hurt.
- The MRI machine is a long tube with a hole in either end. There is also a bed that slides into tube. The tube is very narrow. If your child is **claustrophobic** (afraid of small spaces), tell the care team.
- The MRI machine makes whooshing or banging sounds when it takes pictures. These sounds can be loud or scary for children. Tell your child that the sounds mean the MRI is taking pictures and that the sounds will not hurt him.
- There is no radiation with a pituitary MRI. An MRI uses strong magnets to make pictures of the pituitary gland. Tell your child's doctor if he has any metal in his body, such as braces or a medical device.

Your child's pituitary MRI is scheduled for:

Please follow the instructions given to you from Pediatric Imaging about when to arrive and where to check in.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM A PITUITARY MRI?

Before the MRI

- If your child needs contrast dye (a dye injected into the blood to help make the pictures as clear as possible), he might have an IV placed. The dye will be injected through the IV to help the MRI machine take good pictures. The needle from the IV might hurt a little, but it will be over quickly.
- Ask the care team for an eye mask, ear plugs or headphones if they can help your child feel more comfortable.

During the MRI

- You can stay with your child during the MRI. Dress in clothes that do not have metal. Remove jewelry or piercings.
- Your child needs to lie very still during the MRI. This helps the MRI machine take clear pictures. If your child is very young or finds lying still challenging, ask the care team if he can have sedation.
- A MRI technician (person who makes the MRI machine work) will be in a room next door. He will talk to you and your child through a microphone in the wall. You can also talk to the technician through the microphone.
- If your child becomes very nervous or too uncomfortable for the MRI to continue, tell the care team right away.

After the MRI

- If your child has not had sedation, he can go home after the MRI.
- If your child has had sedation, he will recover in a hospital room until the sedation has worn off.
- If your child has had contrast dye, have him drink lots of water for a few days after the MRI. This can help clear the dye out of your child's body faster.

Rev. 11/2017. MassGeneral Hospital for Children and Massachusetts General Hospital do not endorse any of the brands listed on this handout. This handout is intended to provide health information so that you can be better informed. It is not a substitute for medical advice and should not be used to treatment of any medical conditions.

Pediatric Endocrine and Diabetes Center

Mass General Hospital for Children
55 Fruit Street, Suite 6C
Boston, MA 02114

www.massgeneralforchildren.org/endocrine

For more information please call

617-726-2909