Preparing for Your Fetal MRI

You have been scheduled to have a fetal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) at MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC). This handout will answer some frequently asked questions about fetal MRIs and help you prepare for your appointment.

WHAT IS A FETAL MRI?
A fetal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a noninvasive imaging test that doctors use to see your baby’s body while you are pregnant. The MRI scanner takes clear and detailed images (pictures) of your baby’s body.

WHY DOES MY DOCTOR WANT ME TO HAVE A FETAL MRI?
Your doctor wants you to have a fetal MRI because your last ultrasound showed an abnormal result that your doctor wants to check in more detail. The MRI pictures can help your doctor understand any abnormalities that might affect your baby’s growth and development during your pregnancy and your baby’s future.

HOW DO DOCTORS DO THE FETAL MRI?
The MRI scanner looks like a large, tube-shaped machine. You will lie down comfortably on a table attached to the scanner. The table will slide into the MRI scanner. Then, the MRI scanner will take pictures of your baby’s body.

The MRI technologist who does the test will talk to you and answer any questions or concerns you have that day. The MRI scan usually takes about 30-60 minutes (½ an hour – 1 hour), depending on how much your baby is moving.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A FETAL MRI?
• It’s a good way to learn more about your baby’s face, eyes, brain, spine, chest, stomach or urinary tract.
• It lets doctors see your baby’s body in more detail than on an ultrasound.
• It can give you a better idea of what to expect after your baby is born and as he/she grows and develops.

IS A FETAL MRI SAFE FOR ME AND MY BABY?
Yes, we believe fetal MRIs are safe for you and your baby. There haven’t been any adverse (bad or negative) effects reported on unborn babies from normal use of fetal MRIs. Fetal MRIs use radio waves and magnetic fields (magnets) to take pictures. Fetal MRIs don’t use radiation.

WHEN WILL I GET THE RESULTS?
The radiologist (imaging doctor) will look at the pictures as soon as he/she gets them from the MRI technologist. A formal test report may take up to 24 hours (1 day) after your fetal MRI appointment.

If you have questions, please call the Fetal Care Program at MGHfC at 857-238-CARE (2273).