

MRI: What to Expect

What is an MRI?

MRI (**Magnetic Resonance Imaging**) is a **non-invasive test** that uses **powerful magnets and radio waves** to create **detailed images of the body's organs, bones, and soft tissues**. Unlike X-rays or CT scans, **MRI does not use radiation**.

Why is an MRI Needed?

Your doctor may order an MRI to:

- ✓ Diagnose **joint, muscle, or ligament injuries**
- ✓ Detect **tumors, infections, or nerve issues**
- ✓ Evaluate **spinal conditions (herniated discs, pinched nerves)**
- ✓ Assess **brain function or neurological disorders**

Before the MRI

- ✓ **Wear loose, comfortable clothing** (avoid metal zippers or buttons).
- ✓ **Remove all metal objects** (jewelry, watches, hearing aids, glasses).
- ✓ **Inform your doctor if you have:**
 - A **pacemaker, metal implants, or artificial joints**
 - A **history of kidney problems** (if contrast dye is needed)
 - **Claustrophobia** (you may need a mild sedative)
 - ✓ **Eat normally unless instructed otherwise** (fasting is only required for certain MRIs).

During the MRI

- ✓ You will **lie on a cushioned table** that slides into a tunnel-shaped machine.
- ✓ **Remain as still as possible** for clear images.
- ✓ You may hear **loud knocking or buzzing sounds**-earplugs or headphones will be provided.
- ✓ Some MRIs require **contrast dye (gadolinium)** to enhance images, which is given **through an IV**.
- ✓ The scan usually takes **30-60 minutes**.

After the MRI

- ✓ You can **resume normal activities immediately** unless sedated.
- ✓ If contrast was used, **drink plenty of water** to flush it out.
- ✓ Your doctor will review the images and discuss results at a follow-up visit.

When to Call Your Doctor

If you experience **allergic reactions to contrast dye** (itching, rash, swelling)
If you feel **dizzy, weak, or have trouble breathing** after the MRI
If you have **pain or redness at the IV site** (if contrast was used)

Bottom Line

- ✓ **MRI is safe and painless** but requires lying still.
- ✓ **Remove all metal objects before the scan.**
- ✓ **Discuss concerns (claustrophobia, metal implants) with your doctor beforehand.**
- ✓ **Expect results within a few days** after your doctor reviews the images.

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.