



PATIENT INFORMATION

Children's MRI Scan under general anaesthesia - Information for parents

What is an MRI scan?

A MRI scan can help to find out what is causing your child's problem and help your doctor to find best treatment. MRI scan uses a combination of a large magnet and radio waves and a very sophisticated computer to take clear pictures of inside of your body.

Unlike X-rays and CT scan (Computerised Tomography) scans, MRI scans do not use radiation.

Is it safe?

MRI is a very safe procedure for most patients. However patients with heart pacemaker and certain other surgical implants, for example inner ear implants, cannot be scanned.

You will be asked to complete and sign a safety questionnaire for your child before their scan to make sure it is safe for them to be scanned. During the scan the magnets make a wide range of loud noises such as banging, buzzing and rumbling. For patient safety ear protection will be fitted.

How long will the MRI scan take?

It usually takes around 30 minutes to an hour to scan one part of their body. The length of the scan also varies depending upon the problem that your child's doctor is trying to investigate. It is important to remember that if the scan takes a little longer it does not necessarily mean that there is something wrong.

Why my child needs general anaesthetic?

Your child needs a general anaesthetic to allow them to remain still throughout the duration of the MRI scan. This is important to enable clear and precise images to be obtained by the MRI scanner.

What are the risks and side effects of general anaesthesia?

In modern anaesthesia, serious problems are rare. Risk cannot be removed completely, but modern equipment, training and drugs have made general anaesthesia much safer in recent years.

Most children recover quickly and are soon back to normal after their anaesthetic. Some children may suffer side effects like sickness, sore throat and unsettled behaviour behavioural for a while after the anaesthetic.

The likelihood of complications depends on your child's medical condition and on the type of anaesthesia they need. The anaesthetist will meet with you before the scan, and will discuss with you the risks associated with having a general anaesthetic.

Fasting Instructions:

On the day before the scan your child should eat and drink normally up until midnight. Your child can drink cow's milk and formula milk up to 2:30am.

Your child may have breast milk up to 5:30am

Your child should be encouraged to drink water or squash (not fruit juice or other drinks or food)) until 6:30 am.

Coming to Hospital:

You must be in the assessment unit of Louisa Cary ward at 8:00 am so that all necessary procedures can be carried out before the scan.

On arrival:

You will be seen by a nurse who will weigh your child, take his/her temperature and answer any question you may have. You will be seen by the anaesthetic team who will discuss the benefits, risks, side effects involved in general anaesthesia and get you permission (consent) for it. Whilst on ward ensure all magnetic object or any clothes with metallic fastener (i.e. poppers) or threads are removed.

In the anaesthetic room:

One parent or adult carer can go into the anaesthetic room with your child, along with your ward nurse, until your child is fast asleep. Your child may have a drip inserted in their hand or arm to give the anaesthetic drugs, or be given anaesthetic gas to breath through a mask. In the second case, a drip will probably be inserted after your child is asleep in case further drugs need to be given.

After the Scan:

Your child will probably sleep for awhile after the scan. He will be transferred to the assessment unit of Louisa Cary ward. Your nurse will take regular checks of your child's pulse and temperature. Once he/she is awake and has had something to eat you will be able to go home. The minimum recovery time before discharge is 2 hours. Following a general anaesthetic, children should rest at home for the next 24 hours with a responsible adult caring for them. Children may tire easily and their co-ordination and judgement may be affected. Allow them to gradually increase their activity until they feel back to normal.

The MRI report will be available when you next see your usual doctor in outpatient department.

How to contact us:

Assessment Unit, Louisa Cary Ward: ☎ (01803) 655492 or ☎ (01803) 655526

For more information please visit: www.goingfora.com