



What is an MRI?

Let's Find out!

Scroll down to learn about your MRI
scan

Saint Joseph's Children's Hospital
Marshfield, Wisconsin

An MRI is a camera that takes pictures of the insides of your body!

Does this look like the camera that your mom or dad takes pictures of you with? Probably not! This camera or MRI scanner takes pictures just like the camera you may have at home, but it's MUCH bigger and takes different kinds of pictures.



Does the camera your mom or dad uses at home hurt when they take pictures? I am guessing you said no. This one won't either. It doesn't touch you and doesn't hurt you!

You will need to make sure you are not wearing **ANYTHING** with metal. If you are you will need to change into a special gown. You can take the special gown off after your pictures are finished and wear your normal clothes home.



The person who will take your pictures will ask you to lay on the bed you see in the picture.

Some children have to lie feet first into the tube while others have to lie head first. The way you lie on the bed will depend on what part of your body the doctors want pictures of.



If the doctors want to take pictures of your brain you will probably have to wear a special helmet that looks like an astronaut's or hockey players helmet. This helmet fits over your head but it does not touch or hurt you.

Some children need pictures of their spine. If you are having pictures taken of your spine you probably do not need the helmet, but you may have a special collar instead. This piece goes around your neck, but not around your head. Again it does not hurt you and does not touch you.



Children that are having pictures taken of their arms, legs, or lower spine usually do not need a collar or a helmet. They might need a foam pad that goes over their belly, legs, or arms. You can ask your doctor what they are taking pictures of to help you know what you might be using.

The camera or MRI scanner is going to make loud noises when it takes your picture. Those noises can sound like loud knocking noises or sometimes like a fire alarm at school. Click [here](#) to hear the noises the camera makes.

The MRI scanner can take anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours to take all of your pictures. Normally an MRI scan takes about as long as it would take for you to watch 1 to 2 episodes of your favorite TV show.

While the camera is taking your pictures you have a job to do! Do you think you can help? I think so! Your job is to hold **VERY VERY VERY** still so that your pictures turn out clear. When you move your pictures turnout blurry and may need to be taken again. Remember, when you hear the noises it is your job to hold very still!



While you are getting your pictures taken, Mom and Dad have to wait in the waiting room for you but your Child Life Specialist (if you have one) can stay and hold your hand or leg while you get your pictures taken if you want. Some kids feel better knowing they have someone with them, but other kids say they are fine by themselves. It's up to you!

This is the room where the person who takes your pictures sits. See the computers? That is where your pictures show up. The person who is taking your pictures (the MRI technician) will also be able to talk to you while you are getting your pictures taken. He or she might ask how you are doing or tell you how long each picture will last. It is important for you to answer “I am good,” “I am hot,” “I am cold,” etc. so they know you are okay.

You still need to remember to hold still when the person who is taking your pictures asks you questions. Instead of shaking your head yes/no, just move your lips to talk and remember to use your words!



During your pictures you will either get to listen to music or watch a movie. You will have headphones so you can listen to your music and also listen to the person taking your pictures when they talk to you.

If you get to watch a movie, you will have goggles that fit over your eyes like the boy in the picture. It may seem like you are watching a movie at a movie theater. Pretty cool, huh?



Click on the link below to go to an interactive website that will help you learn more about having an MRI.

<http://radiology.starlightprograms.org/index.html>





Saint Joseph's *Children's* Hospital

MINISTRY HEALTH CARE

MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN

Created by: Lindsey Lohmiller
Child Life Intern
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Saint Joseph's Children's Hospital
Marshfield, Wisconsin