

MRI Arthrogram

General Information

Your health care provider has determined that you need an MRI arthrogram to more accurately diagnose the cause of your pain. An MRI arthrogram is a specialized imaging technique that combines magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) with the injection of a contrast agent directly into a joint. This procedure is particularly useful for evaluating joint structures, including cartilage, ligaments, tendons, and the joint capsule, providing detailed images that can help diagnose various conditions. In order to have the best images, you must have the gadolinium-based MRI dye injected immediately prior to performing your MRI.

Procedure Information

How do I prepare for my MRI and Arthrogram appointment?

- Please wear loose fitting clothes to make it easier to access the target joint. If needed, a gown will be available for you to change into to complete the arthrogram part of the appointment
- The contrast dye used to identify the joint is **iodine** based. The MRI dye used is **gadolinium** based. Please inform your ordering provider if you have an allergy to any of these types of dye or substances
- If you are under 18, **a legal guardian must be present with you to sign the consent**

What should I expect during the MRI?

- You will be asked to remove all of the following objects prior to entering the MRI scanner:
 - Keys
 - Eyeglasses
 - Hair pins
 - Wig
 - Hair extensions or pieces
 - Jewelry
 - Body piercings
 - Credit cards with magnetic strip
 - Coins
 - Pens
 - Tools
 - Battery-operated devices
 - Hearing aids
 - Cell phones
 - Watches
 - FitBit device
 - Pedometers
 - All braces, splints or support wraps
- Items will be in a locked area for safe keeping during scan
- You will be supplied with earplugs and/or headphones due to noise level of machine
- The MRI scan will take around **25-30 minutes**

When should I arrive for the MRI arthrogram appointment?

- You should arrive **30 minutes** prior to your scheduled MRI time. This gives our staff sufficient time to check you in for both your MRI **and** for the arthrogram injection to be completed
- The arthrogram appointment is scheduled for 15 minutes prior to the MRI appointment
- Example timeline for a 2:00pm shoulder MRI with arthrogram
 - **1:30pm:** Arrive at the facility to check in with MRI staff
 - **1:45pm:** Arthrogram will be completed by the interventional pain physician
 - **2:00pm:** MRI shoulder will begin

What should I expect for the arthrogram appointment prior to the MRI?

Prior to your MRI appointment, you will meet the interventional physician and their team for the arthrogram part of your visit. After arrival and check in, you are brought to the pre-operative area where you will sign consent for the procedure and will be taken to the procedure suite.

You will be positioned to view the target joint. Either an X-ray/fluoroscope OR ultrasound OR anatomic landmark approach will be used to identify the bones to guide needle placement. After a cold, cleaning solution is placed on your skin, it is important not to touch the area once it is cleaned. You will then feel a pinch and a burn (much like a bee sting), which is the local anesthetic (numbing medicine). After that, you will feel a pressure and a poke. Once the target region is accessed, contrast dye is commonly used to ensure proper needle placement (if X-ray is used). Then, the MRI dye is injected, which is mixed with a local anesthetic and saline. Once the needle is removed, a Band-Aid/paper tape is applied to the injection site.

You are then escorted to the post-operative area where you will be monitored briefly. Once you are feeling well, a staff member will escort you to the MRI suite to have your MRI completed.

Post-Procedure Instructions

What should I do after the injection?

- You will be escorted to the MRI scanner to obtain your MRI
- Recommend taking it easy for the rest of the day
- Drink plenty of water (32 oz over 24 hours) to clear the contrast from your body
- You **MAY** do normal routine activities such as return to work, do household tasks etc.
- **DO NOT** participate in strenuous activities
- Follow any specific activity restrictions set by your ordering provider as it pertains to the joint in question

What symptoms may I notice?

- Numbness, “heaviness” or increased pain in the joint due to the volume fluid and dye injected
- Pain or discomfort at the injection site from the needle insertion for which ice may be applied
- Mild swelling around the joint
- Allergic reaction to the contrast material (very rare)
- Infection at the site (very rare)
- Typically, all the symptoms will resolve within 24-48 hours

What are the next steps?

- Your MRI will be interpreted by radiologists within a few days (24-72 hours) with a report sent to your ordering provider
- Please keep your scheduled appointment to review the results and to discuss the next steps with your ordering provider

Please contact our office (815) 398-9491 if you experience:

- Any symptoms mentioned above lasting for >48 hours
- For specific questions regarding activity restrictions, MRI Results, next steps in management of your symptoms etc. please reach out to the ordering provider
- Call 911 and seek immediate medical attention in the Emergency Room if you have signs of anaphylaxis (tightness in your throat, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, chest pain, rash/hives, dizziness, itchiness etc.)