



Banner Alzheimer's Institute

***Frequently Asked Questions***  
**Magnetic Resonance Imaging Scan**  
**at Banner Brain Imaging**

Your physician has recommended you undergo a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) test. You may have questions about MRI scans. The Banner Brain Imaging team has developed this document to answer those questions and prepare you for your MRI scan.

To schedule an appointment for a MRI scan, or to change your appointment, call Banner Brain Imaging at (602) 839-7700.

**What is an MRI scan?**

MRI is a medical test that uses a powerful magnetic field to produce detailed pictures of internal body structures to help physicians diagnose illness or injury. Because of this, patients referred for MRI scans need to be thoroughly screened to ensure they do not have any non-safe metal objects, implants or devices which could cause harm if exposed to the strong magnetic field.

**Will my insurance cover the cost of an MRI scan?**

Check with your insurance provider to ask about your coverage. You'll also need to learn if your insurance plan requires pre-authorization for an MRI exam. If so, your referring physician will need to provide documentation that outlines the medical necessity of the procedure to your insurance provider.

Our team is glad to assist by billing your insurance provider. However, patients are responsible for costs not covered by their insurance plans.

*Questions?* Please contact Banner Brain Imaging at (602) 839-7700.

**What can I do to prepare for an MRI scan?**

Please be prepared to discuss if you have a pacemaker, metallic implants or metal fragments in your body. A Banner Brain Imaging team member will also ask about medical conditions that may be relevant. Your responses to these questions help our team determine if it's be safe for you to undergo MRI scanning.

**I'm claustrophobic. What can I do to reduce anxiety during the MRI?**

Ask if your physician can prescribe an oral tranquilizer or anti-anxiety medication to take before the exam. If you do require a sedative for your MRI scan, please alert the scheduler to allow adequate time for the sedation to become effective prior to the scan.

**What can I do to be ready the day of my MRI?**

On the day of your MRI scan, we recommend you wear loose clothing that doesn't have metal zippers, buttons or fasteners. If you forget, we'll have a hospital gown for you to wear. We also recommend that you leave your jewelry at home.

To ensure your safety, one of our team members will ask you again about the existence of items such as pacemakers, metallic implants and metal fragments as well as medical conditions that may be significant.

There are no dietary restrictions for MRIs. However, if your physician has prescribed medication to relax you, please make sure to take that medication as prescribed by your doctor.

**May I bring someone with me to the exam?**

A family member or friend (no small children, please) is welcome to stay with you as long as possible before the exam. One of our team members will tell your family member or friend when the test is about to begin so he or she can go to the waiting area.

**How long does an MRI scan take?**

Most last between 20 and 60 minutes, but some can take up to two hours, depending on the type of scan. The Banner Brain Imaging scheduling staff can provide you a time estimate based on your specific procedure.

**What happens during an MRI scan?**

The scan itself is not painful, but in some cases a contrast dye must be administered through an intravenous line which may cause a slight pinch.

The scanner has a tunnel-like appearance and is open on both ends. During the actual imaging, you'll hear a loud, intermittent banging noise, which is normal. Our team members will give you earplugs and headphones to minimize this noise. Throughout your MRI, our team will do everything possible to make sure you're comfortable.

**How do I get the results of my MRI scan?**

A Banner Brain Imaging physician will interpret your MRI scan and create a report for the physician who referred you for the exam. That doctor will contact you to discuss the results of the MRI scan.