



## Diagnostic Imaging

# MR Arthrogram

### What is an MR Arthrogram?

This is an imaging examination used to obtain detailed images of a joint, such as the hip or shoulder. It involves the injection of a local anaesthetic and a small amount of contrast dye into the joint, which is then followed by an MRI scan. The aim is to diagnose your condition.

### Procedure

Firstly, an MRI Radiographer will go through an MRI Safety Questionnaire with you and then you will be asked to change into a hospital gown. There are two parts to the procedure. For the first part, which lasts a few minutes, you will be taken to an x-ray room where a Consultant Radiologist will inject a small amount of local anaesthetic to numb the skin and the joint. This is followed by a small injection of dye into the joint. X-rays are used to guide the needle into the joint space. When this is complete, you will then be taken to the MRI scanner for an MRI scan of the joint, which usually takes about 20 minutes. After the scan you will be allowed to change and go home.

### After the Injection

After the injection, the joint, and the area around the joint, may be numb for a few hours. However, if it becomes painful, you may take simple pain killers such as paracetamol. Sometimes moving the joint and sore area can help. You can also place an ice pack on the joint and affected area for a few minutes to help relieve pain. You can usually go home straight after having the injection and MRI. If you have urgent concerns after going home, please see your GP or attend the Emergency Department.

### Going Home

It is essential that you do not operate any dangerous machinery. You should not drive for the rest of the day, so please make arrangements for going home. We also advise you not to carry heavy loads for the next three to four days. After this period you can then resume normal activities.

### Follow-up

The clinician who requested the MRI arthrogram will contact you with the results of the MRI. Depending on the findings, an appointment may then be booked for you to discuss the results and future treatment options.

### Questions and Answers

#### Are there any risks of having an MR arthrogram?

MR arthrograms are safe examinations. However, there is a very small chance that infection could be introduced into the joint by the injection. Some people find that the joint is sore for one or two days after the test.

#### What symptoms should I report?

Skin redness, significant swelling, or pain around the site of injection that gets progressively worse over 48 hours are signs of a possible infection.

Shortness of breath, dizziness, feeling faint or developing a rash could indicate an allergic reaction to some of the dye injected into the joint. If you have urgent concerns, please see your GP or attend Accident & Emergency.

### **What are the risks of not having an MR Arthrogram?**

Without a scan, we may not be able to give you a diagnosis for the symptoms you are experiencing. It could also delay possible treatment.

### **What is contrast?**

The contrast dye (injected into the joint) is a colourless liquid called Gadolinium®. There is a small risk of a reaction to the contrast. If you suffer from Renal (kidney) Impairment or Renal Failure, please contact your referrer to organise a blood test to assess this.

### **What are the alternatives to an MR Arthrogram?**

A normal MRI (which does not use contrast) is an alternative test but is not as accurate as an MR Arthrogram. Certain structures within the joint cannot be seen clearly without an arthrogram (contrast).

### **Can I take my normal medication?**

All medication can be taken as normal.

### **Will I need to bring a dressing gown?**

This is not essential, but if you feel more comfortable wearing a dressing gown, then please bring one with you on the day of your test. You will be asked to remove the dressing gown during both parts of the procedure.

### **Can I bring a relative or friend with me?**

Yes. We advise you to bring somebody with you to help you after the scan. You will not be able to drive home after the arthrogram examination.

### **Will the test be painful?**

There is stinging as the local anaesthetic is injected, but after this the tissue will go numb.

### **How long will the test take?**

The test usually takes about 60 minutes altogether.

### **Can I eat and drink normally before the test?**

Yes.

### **Can I eat and drink normally after the test?**

Yes.

### **About this leaflet:**

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



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