

MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI) LUMBAR SPINE

OVERVIEW: Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a sophisticated diagnostic technique that uses a magnetic field, radiowaves, and a computer to generate detailed, cross-sectional images of human anatomy. You will be asked to fill out a screening sheet before entering the MRI suite. If you are claustrophobic or experience pain when lying on your back for more than 30 minutes, let your doctor know prior to scheduling your test. He or she may be able to prescribe a relaxant or pain medication. If you need more sedation than just a single pill, you must not eat or drink 6 hours prior to your test. You will not be able to drive for 24 hours after your procedure so a friend or family member will have to drive you home afterward.

You won't feel anything during the scan but you will hear intermittent humming, thumping, clicking and knocking sounds. We will provide you with either earplugs or headphones with music to help mask the noise.

You may be given a contrast agent to highlight internal organs and other anatomic structures through an IV, depending on the exam ordered and your medical history.

The MRI technologist will not be in the room during the exam but will be able to observe you through a window from a room next door and will be able to hear you and talk to you through a two-way microphone system. The technologist will tell you when each scan sequence is beginning and how long it will last. You will be asked to remain as still as possible throughout the sequence. This is very important because movement will cause the images to blur.

PREP: None (unless patient needs sedation)

PROCEDURE: The patient will lie on a table on their back. You will be given earplugs or earphones with music. You will be asked to hold very still throughout the exam. The exam will take approximately 30 minutes.

RESULTS: When your exam is complete a radiologist will read your MRI scans. Your ordering physician will contact you with the results in approximately 3 days. Your physician will then advise you of the results and discuss what further procedures, if any, are needed.