



Having an MRI scan

at the Epilepsy Society

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This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you might have about having an MRI scan at the Epilepsy Society. If you have any questions after reading it, you can call us before your appointment on 01494 601 360.

Please read this information carefully

This information is important. It explains why you may not be able to have an MRI scan and includes instructions to follow so that it is safe for us to do your scan. If there is any reason why you think you cannot have an MRI, please tell us immediately on 01494 601 360. This will avoid you making an unnecessary journey, and we can give the valuable appointment slot to someone else.

What are MRI scans?

MRI (or magnetic resonance imaging) is a type of scan that gives very clear and detailed pictures of the body.

At the Epilepsy Society we use MRI scans to get detailed pictures of the brain.

Helpline

0300 102 0024

helpline@epilepsysociety.org.uk

Confidential, information, and emotional support.

Visit [epilepsysociety.org.uk/helpline](https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk/helpline) for opening hours.

These scans are helpful to look at the structure of the brain and try to find the cause of an individual's epilepsy.

MRIs use a very strong magnetic field to produce these pictures.

Epilepsy Society's MRI scanner

Our scanner produces very detailed images. We have adapted the way we do our scans (a process called 'acquiring images') to best show areas within the brain which we know to be a potential source of epilepsy.

All our scans are reviewed and reported by a very experienced neuro radiologist.

Can anyone have an MRI?

Metal objects in or near the machine can affect, or be affected by, the machine. So before having an MRI scan, you need to remove any metal objects (such as belts, underwired bras, jewellery and piercings, hearing aids, coins or keys).

Anyone with certain implants may not be able to have an MRI scan because of the strong magnet. Please ring to check if you are unsure - 01494 601 359.

Reasons why you may not be able to have an MRI scan

Please read this list and let us know immediately if any of these apply to you.

- you have a cardiac pacemaker;
- you have a cochlear implant;

- you have had any sort of foreign object enter your body such as from an accident or injury;
- you are pregnant or there is any chance that you are pregnant; or
- you may be anxious or claustrophobic during the MRI.

Before you have the scan

Before your MRI you can eat and drink as you would normally. Please take your medication as normal.

Ideally wear clothes that do not have any metal. Jogging bottoms and a T-shirt are ideal, but please ensure any gym clothes do not have an anti-microbial layer. Also, please do not wear an underwired bra.

Remove any jewellery and body piercings that you have. If you cannot remove a piercing yourself, please arrange to have it removed before you come for your scan.

Do not wear any hair products (such as gel, spray, or oil), or heavy make-up, mascara or glittery cosmetics.

We will ask you to complete a safety checklist to make sure that it is safe for you to have the scan.

What happens during the scan?

When you have the scan, we will ask you to lie down on a couch, which will move partly inside the scanner.

You will be able to see out of the machine by looking in a mirror system. You can hear and talk to us through an intercom.

You will also be given an emergency buzzer so that we can respond instantly if you feel unwell or uncomfortable during the scan.

We will give you some earplugs (because the machine makes a loud noise while it is working).

An MRI scan is usually a series of short scans, with pauses in between, rather than one long scan. To get clear pictures, it is important that **you lie still**, especially while each scan is happening.

Between each short scan we will talk to you through the intercom to check that you are comfortable.

What is fMRI?

fMRI stands for functional magnetic resonance imaging.

fMRI scans are done using the same scanner as a standard MRI. This type of scan allows us to map which areas of the brain are used when performing various tasks, such as looking at photographs or thinking of words.

If we ask you to have an fMRI, we will explain this to you. During the scan, we may ask you to complete simple language, or movement, tasks. For example, we might ask you to think of certain words or move in certain ways. We will then process your scan, which will highlight which areas of your brain are being activated during the task.

fMRIs can be helpful to your consultant if they are considering surgery for your epilepsy or looking at other treatments for you.

Epilepsy Society is grateful to Andrea Hill, MRI Superintendent, The Chalfont Centre, who reviewed this information.



Transforming lives through
research, advocacy, and care.

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epilepsysociety.org.uk



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