

How having an MRI can help research

MRI is a common procedure used in hospitals to monitor your health. MRI can also be used in research, to study the brain. Here at the Department of Neuroimaging, King's College London we use MRI to try to find causes of illnesses which affect the brain and discover new treatments.

When you volunteer for an MRI research study, you will be helping us improve healthcare and the quality of life of people. Your contribution can make a difference!

Remember that participating in research is your choice.

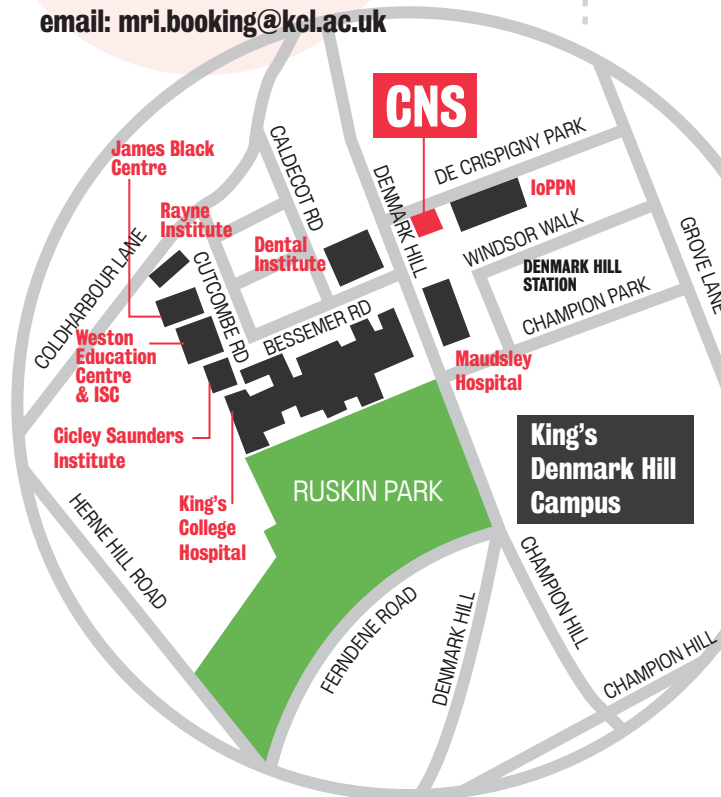
You can change your mind at any time, without telling us your reason.

Contact information

CENTRE FOR NEUROIMAGING SCIENCES (CNS)
The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN)
De Crespigny Park
London SE5 8AF

tel: 02032282121

email: mri.booking@kcl.ac.uk



For more information you may find the following site useful:
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mri-scan/>

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The purpose of this leaflet is to provide brief and general information about MRI. Please contact the researcher who contacted you for more detailed information. Photography by S.J. Wastling and Cherryduck.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HAVE AN MRI SCAN?



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What is an MRI scan?

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. No X-rays are involved. Instead, it uses a strong magnetic field to produce images of organs and tissues including the brain. The images can be used to diagnose illnesses and monitor the effect of treatment. They can also be used for research, to find out how the brain works when we are well and to better understand illnesses and their treatments.



Can I have an MRI scan?

MRI is a technique that has a very low risk of harm. However, because of the strong magnetic field the MRI machine produces, having metals in your body (or in your pockets or clothes) can cause serious injuries. That's why before any MRI you will have a safety screening. You will answer some questions about things like any operations you may have had in the past.

You might not be able to have an MRI scan if you have:

- pacemaker or artificial heart valve
- artificial joints
- implanted devices (like ear implant, drug pump, cardioverter-defibrillator, etc)
- dental plates and bridges
- any other metallic fragments

What happens when I get there?

Before entering the MRI room, you will be asked to remove all metallic objects from your clothes or body. A radiographer will check that you are ready to enter the MRI room safely.

You will be given some earplugs (and sometimes headphones) to reduce the scanner noise. You will then lie on a bed, which will move you into the scanner. You will be asked to stay still while the scan takes place.

Sometimes we will ask you to keep your eyes open and try to not fall asleep, but sometimes you can just close your eyes and rest. We might also ask you to do some computer-based tasks so that we can see how your brain responds while processing information.

Radiographers will assist you throughout the procedure and you will be able to talk with them through an intercom at any time. If you feel uncomfortable you can call them just by pressing a buzzer.

The scan can take from 15 to 90 minutes. This will depend on the reason for the MRI scan. Research sessions tend to be longer than standard clinical scans.

What happens if something is spotted in my brain?

A neuroradiologist will evaluate your MRI scan. If something that requires action is present, we will pass the relevant information on to your GP. Your GP will decide if further assessments are necessary and explain everything in detail to you.