

MRI MYTHS

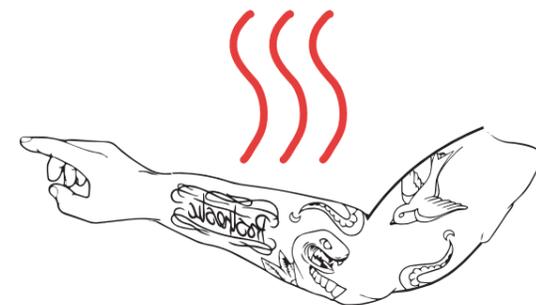
AN MRI SCAN INVOLVES DANGEROUS RADIATION

This is false. MRI uses a magnet, radio waves and a computer to obtain images of your brain. No X-ray radiation is involved.



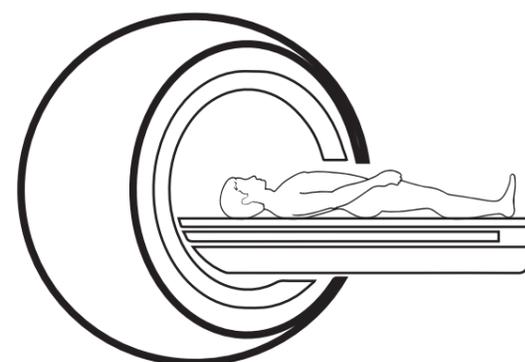
MY TATTOO WILL HEAT UP

This is plausible. Some tattoo inks contain traces of iron that can react to the radio waves used by the MRI machine, causing swelling, irritations and burns. Most tattoos don't cause problems, and even if they do the effects may only be mild and temporary. It is important that if you have any tattoos you tell the radiographers. Depending on the size of the tattoo and where it is, they may place a cool pad on it before your scan in order to minimise any discomfort.



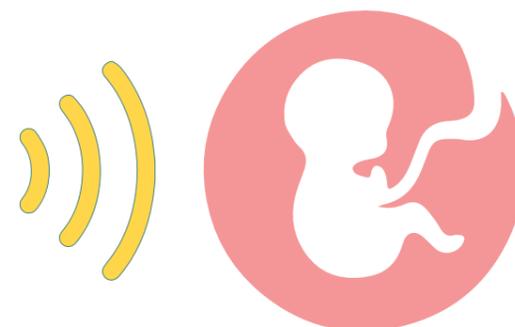
I CAN'T GET AN MRI BECAUSE I AM CLAUSTROPHOBIC

This is true in cases of severe claustrophobia. Modern scanners are more comfortable than the past, though; they can be surprisingly spacious and well lit, so don't let a past experience (or others' experiences) put you off! If you feel nervous or uncomfortable you can always seek assistance from the radiographer. You will usually have a mirror system that allows you to watch what is going on outside the scanner. Depending on the type of scan, you may be able to watch a video or listen to music during your scan.



I CAN'T HAVE AN MRI BECAUSE I AM PREGNANT

Not necessarily. There is no evidence that MRI during pregnancy causes any harm to the foetus or the mother, however we cannot completely rule out this possibility. For this reason, MRI is not usually used for research purposes during pregnancy, but has been used for clinical purposes with pregnant women for over 30 years (usually when the benefits outweigh any possible risks).



WITH MRI SCIENTISTS CAN READ MY MIND

This is false. With MRI scientists can analyse which part of the brain is working harder than others while doing psychological tasks. This information is used in brain research to understand causes of disease and biological mechanisms underlying symptoms.

There is evidence that it may be possible to predict very specific and well-known mental states (like watching a house instead of watching a face) from brain activations detected with MRI, but it is impossible to use brain scans to read someone's mind.

