Preparation for an MRI of the Prostate
Information for patients

Your doctor has requested that you have an MRI of the prostate. The test is performed for one of several reasons, such as:

- Looking for cancer before you have a biopsy or after you have had a negative biopsy.
- Looking for the extent of an already diagnosed cancer.
- Looking for changes in the appearance of the prostate over time.
- Looking to see if cancer has returned after treatment

How should you prepare?
If you are claustrophobic, please let your doctor who ordered the MRI exam know so he/she may prescribe medication to help you relax during the scan. If this is necessary, make certain that someone comes with you for the MRI exam that can drive you home.

- You will be asked to take a Fleets Enema the morning of your exam (preferably within four hours prior to your appointment). Your doctor will write you a prescription or you can purchase this over-the-counter at any local pharmacy. The enema helps to remove air and stool from your rectum and results in better pictures of the prostate, which help the radiologist find cancers.
- You do NOT have to fast prior to your exam.
- You should arrive 30 minutes early for your appointment.
- You should try to go to the bathroom after you check in for your MRI.
- Please leave any valuables (such as jewelry) at home. You will have a locker to hold all your personal belongings, and the key will be with you at all times.

What should you expect during the scan?
Prior to the MRI scan, you will be asked to remove all clothing and put on hospital attire.

After changing into hospital attire, your MRI technologist will place an intravenous line, also called an IV (a needle with a tubing attached in a vein) into your arm, so contrast can be injected towards the end of the exam. The MRI contrast, commonly known as “gadolinium”, helps the radiologist identify areas in the prostate that may be concerning.

Before entering the scan room, a metal detector will be used to make certain that all metal has been removed.

You will enter the scan room and lay feet first on the imaging table. Depending on your height, your head may be located outside of the scanner. You will be lying on an MRI detector pad and your technologist will place a lightweight detector pad on your pelvis in the area of the prostate.
These detector pads are also known as “coils”, and they contain antennae to detect the MRI signal used to make detailed pictures of your prostate.

After the technologist gives you instructions to hold still, earplugs or music will be placed on your ears. Your IV will be attached to a machine that will give you the contrast upon the technologist direction. This contrast injects comes near the end of the exam, and the technologist will communicate before this occurs.

Your technologist will talk to you throughout the exam. Once your technologist leaves the scan room he/she will begin the scan that makes the images. You may still hear noises from the MRI scanner, but your earplugs or music will muffle the sound.

If there is a lot of air in your bowel at the time of the first images, you will be asked to try to expel air and stool in the restroom to clear the area of the prostate for better imaging and then return to the MRI scanner.

**Usually, the MRI scan takes about 45 minutes.**

During the exam, you will be asked to hold still and breathe normally. Towards the end of the exam, you may be asked to hold your breath for part of the scan. Although your technologist is not in the room with you during the scan, they can see and hear you at all times, and you will be given a squeeze ball to alert them if you have any problem.