**HAVING AN MRI SCAN**

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR MRI WITH IV CONTRAST**

**What is an MRI Scan?**

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a specialised scan which uses very strong magnets and radio waves instead of x-rays to take highly detailed images of the tissues inside your body such as spinal cord, blood vessels, internal organs and bones.

**How do I prepare for the MRI Scan?**

**Do not eat any solid food for 2 hours before your scan**, but drink plenty of liquids. Diabetics may have a light meal if necessary.

You will need to **arrive 15 minutes** before your appointment time when you may need to change into a gown, remove all metal objects from your body, have your safety questionnaire checked, and you may have a cannula placed into a vein in your arm or hand by one of the radiographers. This is for an injection of some MRI contrast (dye). Sometimes, a small needle called a butterfly is inserted during the scan instead.

**What is MRI Contrast?**

MRI contrast is mainly composed of an element called Gadolinium. When you have it injected into a vein, much more detailed information of the tissues inside your body can be found. The injection of contrast happens part way through your scan.

**What happens during the MRI Scan?**

You will lie on a bed that is moved into the tube shaped scanner, some scans require a piece of equipment, called a coil, to be placed on or around the part of your body being scanned. Depending on what is being scanned, you will go in either head or feet first – the area you are having scanned will need to be in the centre of the tube. Since the magnet makes a lot of loud noise, you will need to wear headphones which will help mask it. You will hear the radiographer speak to you through the headphones and, if you like, we can play you your choice of music. You will be given a buzzer which you can squeeze to alert the radiographer you wish to speak to them. They can then talk to you once they pause the scan.

**What happens after the MRI Scan?**

The Radiographer who performs the scan will ensure all the images have been taken and are prepared for review by the Radiologist who will send a report to your referring consultant. The time it takes for this to happen varies but is usually done in less than a week. There are no lasting side effects, but you are encouraged to drink extra fluids on the day of your scan to help your kidneys flush the contrast from your system. You can otherwise eat and drink as normal and it is safe to drive and return to work right away.

**Before having the MRI Scan**

Please inform the radiographer if you have any allergies, or any problems with your kidneys that you are aware of.

Females between the ages of 12-55 years will need to confirm that they are not pregnant before proceeding with the scan.

Unfortunately there are no childcare facilities at the hospital and children cannot come into the scanning room with you.

**If you have ever had a brain shunt, brain coil, cochlear implant, cardiac valve replacement, coronary or vascular stent or a joint replacement, please ensure you bring the ID card for the device to your appointment, and if possible, the details of the hospital where you had it inserted. If you have ever had a pacemaker or any other cardiac device inserted, please contact the Imaging Department before attending your appointment**.

If you have any concerns, or would like to discuss the scan and procedure with a Radiographer, please do not hesitate to contact the imaging department on **0208 347 3866** or **diagnostics@highgatehospital.co.uk**