

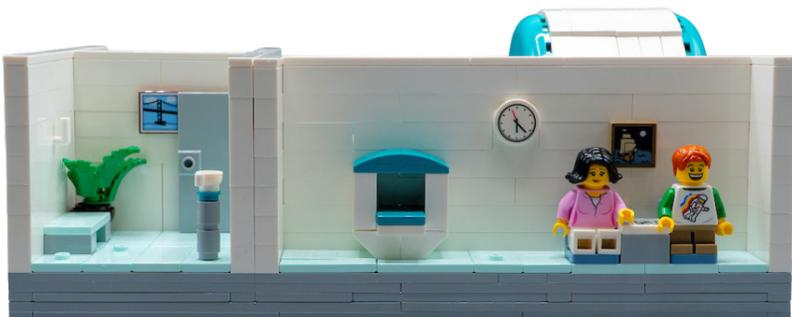


PREPARING FOR AN MRI SCAN Caregiver Guide

Review this guide with your child to prepare for what to expect before, during, and after your child's MRI. If your child has questions that you can't answer, make a list to bring with you and ask your child's team together.

Waiting Area

After checking in, you and your child will wait for a member of your child's team to call them. Talk with your child about bringing something, such as a book, toy, or stuffed animal, to help pass the time.



Caregiver tip

- ▶ **Set a calm tone:** Keep your language about the procedure steady and reassuring. Children often pick up on caregiver anxiety, which can make the procedure more difficult. Reassuring them that they're safe and cared for will help them feel more comfortable.

Holding Room

The MRI scanner uses really strong magnets to take pictures. That means you and your child can't have any metal on your clothes or bodies. Before entering the MRI scanner room, the MRI technologist or another team member will check to make sure this is the case.

Depending on the facility, your child may be asked to change into scrubs. Check with your child's team to confirm the facility's policy.



Caregiver tips

- ▶ **Remove metal:** Anyone entering the scanner room should take off or store away anything that is metal. Be sure to keep items such as glasses, jewelry, watches, cell phones, and wallets at home or stored away.
- ▶ **Talk about coping strategies:** Share with your child's team what helps your child feel calm, such as a comfort item, show, or song. They can work with you and let you know what amenities are available to set your child up for success.
- ▶ **Be flexible:** Not all MRI facilities are exactly the same, and some situations may require more urgency or allow for fewer accommodations. Your child's team will always do what is in the best interest of your child's health.



MRI Scanner Room

Scan Preparation

Your child's team will help them lie down on a comfortably padded table that smoothly slides in and out of the MRI scanner. Sometimes, children receive a contrast agent intravenously (IV) through a vein in their arm to make the pictures clearer. If needed, your child's team will place the IV at this point.

To protect their hearing during the scan, your child will be provided with earplugs or headphones. Depending on the facility, your child may be given a squeeze ball or shown how to use a call button to get the MRI technologist's attention if needed. If your child uses the squeeze ball or call button, the MRI technologist will pause the scan and help your child with whatever they need.



During Your Child's Scan

Once you, your child, and the MRI technologists are ready, the scan will begin.

Caregiver tips

- ▶ **Be prepared for how long it will take:** Ask your child's team beforehand how long they expect the scan to take. If the scan takes more time, try to stay relaxed knowing your child is in safe hands. This usually just means the technologist needs extra images to get the clearest pictures, not that anything is wrong.
- ▶ **Expect loud sounds:** The MRI machine makes banging and tapping noises while taking pictures. Ear protection will be provided for your child and these sounds are a standard part of the scan.

Caregiver tips

- ▶ **Practice staying still:** During the MRI scan, your child will be asked to lie still to ensure clear and accurate images. If your child will be awake during the procedure, try these fun ways to practice and explain why staying still is important:
 - ▶ **Show the difference:** Take one picture of your child's hand holding still and another of it waving. Compare the two and talk about why stillness matters.
 - ▶ **Make it a game:** Play freeze tag or "statue," where you both stay still and quiet like statues. Turning it into play can make the idea less intimidating.
- ▶ **Ask where you'll be:** Ask your child's team where you should be located during the scan. Sometimes caregivers can stay in the MRI scanner room with their child. In some facilities, caregivers can be in the viewing room with the technologists, where they can see and communicate with their child during the scan.

After the MRI Scan

The MRI technologist cannot share any results with you. After the scan, a radiologist will interpret the images and prepare a report for your child's doctor, who will be in touch to discuss the results. The timing of this follow-up depends on a variety of factors, such as the urgency of your child's case and the complexity of the scan.



Caregiver tip

- **Celebrate:** After your child has completed the MRI, celebrate by saying something like, "We're so proud of you for being able to hold still for your MRI pictures," and/or "We're so proud of you for being brave!"

