

Procedure Information: MRI Arthrogram

What is a MRI Arthrogram?

A MRI Arthrogram is a combination of both radiographic and MRI procedures to evaluate your joint. It requires an injection of a contrast material (X-ray dye) directly into your joint. With contrast in the joint, the structures within the joint become visible allowing the radiologist to evaluate the anatomy and function of the joint. There are multiple types of MRI Arthrogram depending upon the joint in question, including:

- Ankle
- Elbow
- Hip
- Knee
- Shoulder
- Wrist

When is a MRI Arthrogram ordered?

A MRI Arthrogram is ordered when detecting tears or lesions of the structures and ligaments of the joints. A rotator cuff tear of the shoulder is most common.

Patient preparation

There is no preparation for this exam.

What happens during an MRI Arthrogram?

A MRI technologist will verify your identity and obtain medical history for the radiologist. You will be taken to a private changing room to change for the procedure. You will then be accompanied by a radiographer to the X-ray room. You will be positioned on the examination table with the joint of interest closest to the radiologist. The radiologist will cleanse the skin around the joint with an antiseptic and cover the area with a sterile drape. Using a small needle, local anesthetic is injected by the radiologist at the area of the joint space. This may give a slight burning sensation. A longer needle is then inserted into the joint using fluoroscopic guidance. Once the needle is in position, contrast is injected into the joint space while the radiologist watches under fluoroscopy. The needle is removed and you will be returned to the MRI department.

What happens during a MRI Arthrogram?...Continued.

At this time, the MRI technologist will complete the MRI scan. You will be positioned on the MRI scan table on your back. The MRI technologist will make sure you are as comfortable as possible because you need to hold still for the duration of the scan. The MRI machine is loud, so for your comfort our MRI offers a patient stereo system that allows you to listen to a CD or radio station during your study. You are welcome to bring a CD of your own.

Length of Procedure

The radiographic portion of a Arthrogram is usually completed within 30 minutes. The MRI scan will take up to an additional 30 minutes.