

# MR Enterography

(Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

## What is an MRE?

Note: child-friendly language in green.

- An MRE is a test that uses a large magnet, radio waves, a computer, and contrast to take detailed pictures of inside the body. It does not use radiation.
- An MRI scanner (special, big camera) has a tunnel with a bed that moves in and out. Some kids say it looks like a spaceship or doughnut.



MRI Prep Room

## Why is it done?

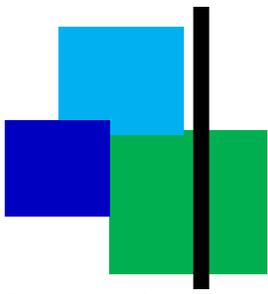
- An MRE is used to produce 2-3 dimensional images of your child's small intestine.
- An MRE is often used to diagnose certain conditions such as inflammation, bowel obstructions, bleeding, tumors, and abscesses. Information from the MRE may then help the team plan treatments.



MRI Scanner #3– Sunset Safari Theme

## What can I do to help my child?

- Child life specialists are available to help your child better understand and cope with the scan.
- Parents/caregivers can be in the scanner room with their child as long as a technologist confirms that they are MRI safe.
- Please ask a staff member for more information about these options for support!



# What should I expect during the procedure?

The entire test takes about 3 hours and is done in three stages.

## Stage 1: Getting ready

- First, MRI staff will bring you and your child into a small private room (the prep room) to get ready for the exam and record your child's weight. A nurse or technologist (person who helps take the pictures) will then have your child change into a hospital gown (special picture outfit).
- Most patients need IV contrast (picture medicine) to help make their MRE pictures more clear. If your child needs IV contrast for his/her scan, a nurse will gently place an IV (tiny, soft straw placed into a vein using a small needle) into his/her arm or hand.
  - \* Your child may feel a little discomfort (like a small, quick poke) when the IV is placed.
  - \* Encourage your child to hold his/her arm very still and to take deep breaths.
- Most kids also need to drink oral contrast called Breeza (picture medicine). The amount your child needs to drink will depend on his/her weight. He/she will be asked to continuously drink the contrast over about 90 minutes.
- Next, MRI staff will ask if your child has any metal on or inside his/her body, such as jewelry, watches, or pacemakers.
  - \* If your child is curious, you can explain that the MRI scanner (special, big camera) uses magnets to take pictures, so metal is not allowed near it.
- A parent and/or trusted adult may accompany his/her child during the scan. This adult will also need to be screened for metal items.
  - \* We have lockers you may use to store belongings and any metal items during your child's scan.

## Stage 2: MRI scanner room

- When your child is ready, an MRI technologist will walk him/her to the scanner room and help him/her get in a comfortable position on the camera bed.
  - \* Most kids are asked to lie on their stomach for this particular scan.
  - \* Your child will be given pillows, blankets, earplugs, and/or music headphones. The technologist will provide your child with music options. No outside devices can be used.
  - \* Your child will have an imaging coil placed over the part of the body being scanned. This will help make the pictures even more clear.

## Stage 3: Pictures

- Next, the bed will move into the camera tunnel. Your child's job is to stay very still in order to ensure clear pictures. The technologist will leave the room to take the pictures.
  - \* Talk with your child about ways to make holding still in the tunnel easier, such as taking a nap, thinking of a favorite place, or pretending he/she is a statue.
  - \* Let your child know the technologist will be able to see and hear him/her the whole time.
  - \* Let your child know that the MRI will make loud noises throughout the scan and that this is normal.

# Tips for preparing your child for a MRE

A child life specialist (CLS) can help support your child for his/her procedure by explaining it in developmentally appropriate language and suggesting possible coping strategies. If you would like to speak to a CLS before your appointment, see back for contact information.

## Preschoolers (3-5 years old):

- Begin preparing your child about 1-3 days in advance.
- Talk to your child about why he or she is having pictures taken. For example, “The doctor will take special pictures of inside your body to learn about how it body works.”
- Use simple words to describe what your child may experience. For example, “The camera makes loud noises that sound like someone is knocking on the door. The camera won’t touch or hurt you.”
- Let your child know that he/she needs to stay very still so that the pictures are not blurry.
- Talk to your child about the importance of drinking the contrast - try making it a game!
- Help your child practice lying absolutely still pretending. He/she can pretend to be a statue!

## School Age (5–12 years old):

- Prepare your child at least several days in advance.
- Talk to your child about why the doctor wants to take special pictures of inside his/her body. For example, “So the doctor can learn more about how your body works.”
- Explain to your child what he or she might see, hear, and feel in the order things will occur. Use child-friendly and/or real terms depending on your child’s age/preference.
- Talk to your child about the importance of drinking the contrast - try making it a game!
- Let your child know that he/she will need an IV (tiny, soft straw placed into a vein using a small needle) for the pictures. Talk about ways to make the IV easier such as taking deep breaths, watching TV, etc.
- Talk with your child ahead of time about the sounds an MRI scanner makes (loud buzzing and knocking). Let your child know he/she can wear earplugs or listen to music.
- Let your child know that he/she will need to stay very still so that the pictures are not blurry.
- Help your child practice lying absolutely still on a bed or a table. Talk about ways to help make staying still easier, such as keeping his/her eyes closed, taking a nap, listening to music, etc.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.

## Adolescents and Up (13 years old– and Up):

- Prepare your teen at least several days in advance.
- Talk to your teen about why the doctor wants to take special pictures of inside his/her body. For example, “So the doctor can learn information about a part of your body.”
- Explain to your child what he or she might see, hear, and feel in the order things will occur. Use child-friendly and/or real terms depending on your child’s age/preference.
- Talk to your child about the importance of drinking the contrast. For example, “The contrast will help make the pictures more clear so we can see how the inside of your body works.”
- Let your child know that he/she will need an IV (tiny, soft straw placed into a vein using a small needle) for the pictures. Talk about ways to make the IV easier such as taking deep breaths, watching TV, etc.
- Talk with your child ahead of time about the sounds an MRI scanner makes (loud buzzing and knocking). Let your child know he/she can wear earplugs or listen to music.
- Let your child know that he/she will need to stay very still so that the pictures are not blurry.
- Talk about ways to help make staying still easier, e.g. taking a nap, or listening to music.
- Encourage your teen to ask questions.

## Child Life

Children's National Hospital Department of Radiology is staffed with Certified Child Life Specialists. Child life specialists are trained to address the emotional and developmental needs of children and their families during healthcare experiences and can provide procedural preparation and support before and during your child's exam.

## Contact Information

If you would like to speak to a child life specialist before your child's radiology appointment, please call **202-476-3338** or email **[childliferadiology@childrensnational.org](mailto:childliferadiology@childrensnational.org)**.

Created by Children's National Child Life Services

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