



MR scanning machine

MRI scan

In some cases, the doctor looking after your child will decide a different type of brain scan should be performed; this is called an MRI scan. This test looks at both the brain and spine in detail.

It takes approximately 30 minutes to perform an MRI scan and your child will need to be still throughout. Very young babies can have their scans performed when they are sleeping after a feed. Older babies will need to have a general anaesthetic.

When will I get the results of the skeletal survey and head scan?

All of the images will be looked at and assessed by 2 Consultant Radiologists and a written report will be sent to your child's doctor on the ward.

For the skeletal survey part of the examination the full result is not available until a second series of X-ray pictures are taken 14-21 days after the first appointment.

What are the risks?

The benefits of performing a skeletal survey examination +/- a CT head scan are considered to outweigh the risks of *not* doing these tests ('justifying' the examinations), when all of the bones in the body and the brain need to be evaluated.

The X-ray radiation dose received during a skeletal survey or during a head scan is kept as low as possible by using specialist equipment and techniques ('optimising' the examination). The radiation dose is monitored by the X-ray Department staff.

There is no radiation involved for an MRI scan. The pictures are generated using a strong magnet.

Second appointment

To complete the skeletal survey a second series of X-ray pictures are taken 14-21 days after the first appointment.

The procedure for this appointment is similar to the first one. A routine follow up examination requires fewer images; the number required depends upon the results of the images obtained at the first appointment. If your child has had a cast applied to treat a fracture it may be necessary to remove this to carry out the X-rays or alternatively delay the X-rays until the cast is removed.

If you have questions about any aspect of the skeletal survey or head scan examinations, please ask the doctor who is looking after your child

Imaging Services
CONTROLLED DOCUMENT
PIL Skeletal surveys and head scans



The Northern Ireland Paediatric Radiology Group

**INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS
AND CARERS**

Skeletal surveys and head scans

This leaflet has been produced to provide you with information about skeletal surveys and head scans. If you have further questions, please ask the doctor looking after your child.

What is a skeletal survey?

A skeletal survey is a series of X-rays to show all the bones in the body; it takes between 30-60 minutes to complete. The pictures then need to be checked by one of the X-ray doctors (radiologist) to see if they are happy that they can see all the bones clearly. They sometimes ask for some more X-rays to be taken.

A second visit is needed approximately 2 weeks later to complete the examination. You will receive an appointment for the second visit before you leave the hospital.

Why does my child need a skeletal survey?

A skeletal survey is performed to look for any abnormality or injury to the bones.

The doctor looking after your child will explain why your child needs this examination.

Where is the skeletal survey done?

The examination is performed in the X-ray Department.

Consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your child's care. Your child's doctor will answer any questions you have and will ask you to sign a consent form prior to the examination. You can withdraw your consent at any time prior to the examination, even if you have said 'yes' previously.

How to prepare:

Your child will have to be undressed for the examination and nappies will need to be removed for some of the X-rays. It is useful to bring a spare nappy and wipes with you.

One of the ward staff will accompany you and your child to the X-ray Department for the examination and will stay with you throughout. When you arrive in the Department, you will be met by the people who will take the X-ray pictures (the radiographers).

During the examination:

The radiographers will position your child for each X-ray picture. You will be asked to hold your child still for each of the images taken and wear a protective apron to prevent you being exposed to X-rays. The staff present will be able to assist if necessary.

If you are pregnant or there is a possibility that you might be pregnant please make the radiographer aware and they will advise you of your options.

Will the examination be painful for my child?

The exam does not hurt, but some children can get upset because they do not like being held still. It is a good idea to bring a feed, dummy or a toy along to help settle your child if they need it.



CT scanning machine

CT head scan

Your child may have a CT head scan as part of their investigations. This will be performed by CT trained radiographers.

A CT head scan looks at the bones in the skull and the brain. It will show any signs of injury that may not be apparent when the doctor examines your child.

The CT head scan is performed in the X-ray Department.

The CT scan takes only a few minutes, but to get clear pictures of your child's head, it is important for them to lie as still as possible. The best way to do the examination is for your child to be asleep and wrapped up in a blanket or sheet. Some children may need to be sedated with medicine for this test. You will normally be able to stay by your child's side whilst the scan is being performed.

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