NHS
University Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

Your child's MRI scan under general anaesthetic

St Richard's Hospital

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about what happens and what you should do if your child needs a general anaesthetic so that they can have an MRI scan.

It explains:

- why your child may need to be under a general anaesthetic when they have their MRI scan
- what you should tell your child about their anaesthetic and scan
- how to get your child ready for their scan
- what to bring into hospital
- what happens before and during the scan
- what happens after the scan and when your child is ready to go home.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because your child needs to have an MRI scan to help to diagnose their condition or to check how their condition is progressing.

They need to stay still for the scan so that the images from the scan are as clear and useful as possible. So that they stay still they will have a general anaesthetic (a medication which means they are 'asleep' and are able to stay still during the scan).

Following the advice in this information will help to make sure that the scan goes as well as possible and that your child is as safe as possible when they have their general anaesthetic.

Why might my child need a general anesthetic to have their scan?

A paediatric consultant (a doctor who specializes in treating children) will talk with you about the reasons your child needs an MRI scan.

We usually recommend that children have an MRI scan under general anaesthetic if:

- they are under 6 years old
- they have special needs. For example, they may have a condition which causes seizures, or have a condition such as autism or ADHD or be neurodiverse in another way. This could mean they are more likely to, for example:
  - be very anxious about having an MRI
  - find the noise that the MRI makes or being in a confined space upsetting
  - find it difficult to stay still while they are having an MRI.

Be aware

it is very important for your child to be still for the whole of their MRI scan, which can take up to an hour. This is so we get clear images from the scan.

An anaesthetist (a doctor who is a specialist in giving anaesthetics and caring for people while they are anaesthetized) will care for your child throughout their scan.

How will you check that it is ok for my child to have their scan?

A nurse who is a specialist in caring for children (paediatric nurse) will phone you before your child's scan appointment. They will ask you some questions about your child and any conditions they have or have had. This is to make sure that having a scan under general anaesthetic is safe for your child.

How can I prepare my child for their visit to hospital?

It will help your child if you tell them that they are going to visit the hospital and what to expect from their visit.

Do tell them:

- ✓ that they are going into hospital for a few hours
- ✓ some simple information about what will happen to them during their visit to hospital
- ✓ that they will be having a scan.

Can I bring my child to visit Howard Ward before the day of their scan to help them to know what to expect?

Yes. If you think it would help your child, you can bring them to visit the ward. Please phone Howard Ward on **01243 831444.** We will arrange a time for you and your child to visit and for a Play co-ordinator to be there.

What must I do on the day of my child's scan?

- **Fasting** (avoiding food and drink before the scan). Your child must have an empty stomach before they have their scan because they are having a general anaesthetic.

Do

- ✓ make sure you follow the instructions in the **Fasting information** leaflet.

- **Medications.** If your child takes regular medication to control their seizures or behaviour (other than methylphenidate) do give them their usual dose with 20 to 40 mls of water. You should do this before 7am on the morning of the scan.

What should my child wear when they come into hospital for their scan?

Please make sure your child is dressed in comfortable clothing with no metal zips, poppers or buttons.

Your child must not wear any jewelry, make-up or nail varnish.

What should I bring into hospital for my child on the day of their scan?

Please bring your child's:

- favourite snack and drink. Use their usual bottle or beaker.
- cuddly toy, comforter or blanket
- favourite game or toy and book.

You are responsible for all your personal belongings while you are at the hospital.

Where should I bring my child for their appointment?

On the day of your child's scan, please bring them to:

Howard Ward (the children's ward). This is on the 2nd floor of the Women and Children's block at St. Richard's Hospital.

Please arrive at 7.45am.

What happens once me and my child arrive at Howard Ward?

1. When you arrive at the ward a member of the ward staff will take you and your child to their bed area. They will have a nurse assigned to look after them.There are plenty of toys and games on the ward that your child can play with.

2. The nurse will check things such as your child's blood pressure, heart rate, how quickly they are breathing and how much oxygen is in their blood. This is called checking their 'vital signs'. The nurse will add these to your child's medical record and do any paperwork which is needed.
3. The nurse will tell you and your child about having an anaesthetic and using 'magic cream'. 'Magic cream' numbs your child's skin and the tissue underneath it. The nurse may put it on the back of your child's hand and cover it with a clear sticky patch. The cream is left on for about 45 minutes. This is so your child will only feel a little discomfort if a cannula (a fine, hollow needle attached to a tube) is put into the back of their hand. The cannula is put in so that the anaesthetist can give your child their anaesthetic medicine through it later on.
4. The anaesthetist will come to see you and your child on the ward. They will talk with you about the anaesthetic and what happens to your child when they have it.

Do

✓ tell the anaesthetist if you have any worries or concerns. You and your child are welcome to ask any questions or for further information or explanations.

5. After the anaesthetist has seen you and your child, your child will be escorted to the MRI scanning department. Their nurse will go with them.

What happens when my child arrives at the MRI scan department?

1. The staff in the MRI department (radiography staff) and the anaesthetist will care for your child while they are in the MRI department.
2. The anaesthetist will give your child their general anaesthetic (the anaesthetic which means they will be 'asleep' while they

have their scan). There are two ways in which this might be done. They will either:

- be asked to breathe in some special sleeping gas through a mask.
- be given anaesthetic medication through the cannula that the anaesthetist has put in the back of their hand. They should not feel much discomfort when the cannula is put in because of the 'magic cream'.

Whichever type of anaesthetic your child has, you can stay with them to comfort and cuddle them until they are asleep.

3. When your child is asleep you will leave them. The anaesthetist and radiography staff will care for them. You will be directed to where you can wait and get some refreshments while your child is having the scan.
4. Throughout your child's scan the anaesthetist checks your child's heart rate, how fast they are breathing (their respiratory rate) and their blood pressure so that they stay safe.

What happens after my child has had their scan?

After they have had their scan, your child will stay in the scanning department until they have recovered from their anaesthetic. As soon as they are awake you can go and be with them.

Children usually wake quickly from an anaesthetic. They may be drowsy and a little grumpy for a while.

A nurse will stay with your child as they are taken back to the ward. Once they are back on the ward and awake your child can have a drink and a snack. This usually helps them to feel better.

While your child is on the ward a nurse will check how they are and that they are recovering from the anaesthetic as they should.

Your child should be fully awake and recovered around 1 hour after they have brought back to the ward.

When can my child go home?

When your child is likely to be ready to go home a nurse will check that they are fit and well enough (fit for discharge). They will also check with you that you are happy to take your child home.

How will I know how to care for my child after they are back at home after their scan?

Before your child goes home, we will give you information on how to care for them. This includes information about how to contact us if you have any concerns about your child after their scan.

When will I find out the results of the scan?

The consultant paediatrician (doctor who is a specialist in children's health conditions) will have the results of your child's scan by the time of their next appointment. They will talk with you about the scan results.

Who can I contact if I need further information after I have read this information or if I have any concerns?

Please contact us on Howard Ward. We are always happy to answer your questions and talk with you about any concerns you or your child have.

Howard Ward **01243 831 444**

For questions about appointment bookings please phone the MRI scanning department.

MRI scanning department **01243 788122** **Ext. 33553**

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in St Richard's.

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