



Ask our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David Sand:

What is an MRI and Why Would my Doctor order one?

From diagnosis to treatment to pharmaceuticals, medicine continues to advance and, by doing so, stretch the boundaries of what is possible. One of the examples of this is magnetic resonance imaging – more commonly referred to simply as an MRI.

The MRI machine can look intimidating but it is harmless and safe. In fact an MRI is not only a non-invasive tool, but unlike CT scans and x-rays, does not use potentially harmful ionizing radiation. Instead, it uses a large magnet, radio waves, and a computer to create a detailed, cross-sectional image of internal organs and structures. The scanner itself typically resembles a large tube with a table in the middle on which the patient lies

while the test is being performed. Both ends of the scanner are fully open at all times.

An MRI allows your doctor see the organs and tissues inside your body without having to do surgery. It is most often ordered by your doctor after prescribed forms of treatment (such as physical therapy for back pain) or other methods of testing – including x-rays and/or CT scans-- fail to provide sufficient information to confirm a diagnosis.

Some examples of where an MRI would be used:

- anomalies of the brain and spinal cord
- tumors, cysts, and other anomalies in various parts of the body
- breast cancer screening for women who face a high risk of breast cancer



- injuries or abnormalities of the joints
- certain types of heart problems
- diseases of the liver and other abdominal organs
- the evaluation of pelvic pain in women

Before you get an MRI Talk to your doctor about conservative therapy. An MRI is great if you're going to have surgery or a special injection, but most people don't need, or want, that type of treatment. Many times rest, medication (NSAIDs or Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs instead of narcotics), changes in your activity, physical therapy or acupuncture can take care of the situation.

You could also take an active part in making the decision by downloading the app called Choosing Wisely®. Choosing Wisely® is a program by the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation

that encourages people to speak with their doctors to help choose care that is: supported by evidence, not a repeat of other care, free from harm, and truly necessary. The app is available for either iPhone or Android. With the app you can look up certain tests and have a discussion with your doctor to see if they're best for you.

Care N' Care must obey Medicare's strict guidelines when your doctor requests an MRI, or other kinds of treatment. We will make an effort to approve your doctors' requests for services that are approved by Medicare, but Medicare also requires us not to pay for services that are not supported by the evidence or are repetitive, dangerous or not necessary. Your doctor can help avoid delays by sending Care N' Care all the necessary information about your condition for review.

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