

Fetal MRI Guidelines for Parents

Fetal Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is considered a safe and effective imaging tool to obtain more information about congenital anomalies after they have been detected on ultrasound.

Theoretical concerns exist about tissue heating, teratogenesis (process by which congenital malformations are produced in an unborn baby) and acoustic damage but no evidence of actual harm exists.

Limits exist to regulate heat generated in both mother and fetus during an MR study. Ongoing studies are exploring the effect of acoustic noise on the fetus. **“Present data have not conclusively documented any deleterious effects of MR imaging at 1.5T on the developing fetus [1-11].”** – ACR-SPR PRACTICE PARAMETER FOR THE SAFE AND OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE OF FETAL MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI).

For the MRI scan you will lie on your back (or rolled slightly on to your left side with pillow support if lying on your back is uncomfortable) for the duration of the scan. You will enter the machine feet first and your head will be outside the machine so you shouldn't feel claustrophobic.

The scan usually takes less than 30 minutes but if your baby moves a lot during the study it may take a bit longer if it's necessary to repeat some of the studies.

It is best not to eat or drink just before the study as increased blood sugar can make the baby more active! Avoid drinks with caffeine and sugar 3 hours before the study but eat and drink water as normal.

A radiographer will be watching you throughout the study and you will have an emergency button to push if needed.

The results of the study will not be available directly afterwards. Your fetal medicine doctor will discuss the results with you at your follow-up appointment.

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