

# Having a small bowel MRI

## Information for patients

Your doctor has asked you to have this examination to look at your small bowel in more detail using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

To have a successful MRI scan, it is important you read and follow the information provided in this leaflet. If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the team caring for you.

### **Confirming your identity**

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your name and date of birth and check your ID band. If you do not have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address. If we do not ask these questions, then please ask us to check. Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

## How do I prepare for this exam?

- To prepare your small bowel for the study, **you must not eat anything for at least 6 hours prior to your scan**. You may only drink clear fluids.
- You can take your regular medication.
- If you suffer from diabetes, bring any medication you take and something to eat after the scan.
- If you have an ileostomy, bring an additional bag with you to your appointment.

## What happens before the procedure?

- You will need to arrive in the MRI department 1 hour before your examination.
- To enlarge and allow a good picture of the bowel you will be asked to drink a mixture of mannitol and water steadily over 1 hour before your scan.

## What happens during the procedure?

- Once you finish the mannitol and water you will be taken into the scanner room.
- You will lie on your front or back with a piece of equipment placed over your abdomen and pelvis which helps take the pictures.
- There will be breathing instructions during some of the scans and you will need to hold your breath for about 15 to 20 seconds.
- The scan itself takes around 30 minutes.
- You may be given two injections to improve the quality of the images, unless there are reasons you can't have them.

## What are the injections required for my exam?

- **Buscopan** is given to reduce involuntary bowel movements which can cause blurring on images.
- **Gadolinium contrast** helps to further highlight and demonstrate structures of the small bowel and abdomen.

## What is mannitol?

Mannitol is a naturally occurring sugar in fruits and vegetables. It is licensed to be given as an intravenous infusion (through a vein), but it has been used and adopted as a safe and effective way to enlarge the bowel for imaging procedures across many NHS imaging sites.

## Will mannitol interfere with my regular medication?

Mannitol is poorly absorbed when taken by mouth and unchanged when it leaves the body. This means that it is unlikely it will interact with any other medications you may be taking.

As a precaution, please let the radiographer know if you are taking any of the following medications:

- diuretic medication
- lithium

- ciclosporin
- aminoglycoside
- digoxin
- oral anticoagulants medication

Alternatively, speak with your doctor before the day of your MRI examination.

### **I am diabetic. Can I have mannitol?**

Mannitol is only partially absorbed and it is not processed by humans, therefore it doesn't cause hyperglycaemia. As a result, for the purpose of this MRI test, diabetic patients can take mannitol.

### **Are there any risks?**

A small bowel MRI is generally regarded as a very safe test and problems rarely occur. Potential complications are uncommon and include:

- diarrhoea
- flatulence
- vomiting
- abdominal spasms after taking mannitol by mouth

**Please contact the MRI department on 020 3299 1797 (King's College Hospital) or 01689 863642 (Princess Royal University Hospital) if you have any further concerns or questions.**

### **Consent**

We must by law obtain your written consent to any procedures beforehand. Staff will explain all the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of the treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask to speak with a senior member of staff.

### **Sharing your information**

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

### **Care provided by students**

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by imaging patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your imaging will not be affected by your decision.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: [kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: [kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net)

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email [kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net)**