



INFORMATION ON MRI SCANS

What is an MRI scan and why have I been referred for one?

A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan is an important tool in helping to diagnose injuries. MRI uses magnets which are non-radiating (i.e. safe) to construct an image of area of the body being scanned. It takes approximately 30 minutes to conduct each scan (area of body imaged).

MRI scans should not be used in isolation and must be combined with a comprehensive medical assessment and advice. At an appointment your doctor will have determined that an MRI is appropriate from taking a history and examining you.

Are there any risks?

MRI imaging practices provide a checklist to make sure you have no risk of mobile metal inside the body, as the magnet can cause this to move. In addition, some people get claustrophobia and cannot tolerate lying inside an MRI scanner for 30 minutes (usual duration). In these cases, sedation (via medication) or general anesthesia (requires an anaesthetist) may be arranged *in addition* to the MRI with the radiology practice, but the cost is likely to be higher.

How do I organise an MRI scan?

If you have been referred for an MRI then you must book and arrange the scan with a Radiology practice. There are many to choose between in Sydney and your referral is eligible for all MRI machines. You can make your choice based on:

- Convenience, Location, Availability and Cost (see below)
- Scan Resolution- 3 Tesla MRI produces better detail than 1.5 Tesla magnet strength
- Features- sedation, anaesthetic and machine setup. Blacktown "Upright MRI" scans patients while seated which helps for claustrophobia and can scan in different body positions.

Occasionally a certain machine or radiologist will be particularly specialised to deal with your condition, but for most cases the quality of MRI scans performed in Australia is good.

Will I get a Medicare rebate or be able to claim on private health insurance for an MRI?

In Australia, MRI units are either "General" (Partial) or "Specialist" (Full) Medicare Eligible.

A General MRI can provide a rebate but **ONLY** for certain conditions (e.g. Neck MRI for nerve pain, or Knee MRI for suspected meniscal tears in younger patients—referred via GP or Specialist).

Specialist Eligible MRI can provide a rebate **ONLY** with a Specialist referral and may be able to bulk bill- but *this is their decision and has nothing to do with your referrer*. You cannot claim on any Australian private health insurance for MRI scans.

How much will it cost?

The usual overall gap for an MRI is between \$200-300 PER REGION scanned. You can shop around.

Fully Medicare-eligible unit: You can claim a Medicare rebate for certain scans. **Please ask the radiology practice for the full cost of a scan when you are booking.**

Partially -Medicare-eligible unit: usually less than Medicare-eligible machines, but with no Medicare rebate available (unless certain indications).

Workers' Compensation: insurance companies will cover the full cost but must pre- approve the scan in writing.

Fully Eligible MRI	Address	Phone
Castlereagh St Leonards	60 Pacific Highway ST LEONARDS	9978 7900
Castlereagh Edgecliff	235 New South Head Road EDGECLIFF	8340 3800
Castlereagh Westmead	20-22 Mons Road WESTMEAD	8844 1750
Specialist MRI	RPAH Medical Centre 100 Carillion Avenue NEWTOWN	9557 1464
I-Med Miranda	533 The Kingsway MIRANDA	9525 6055
St Vincents Medical Imaging	438 Victoria Street DARLINGHURST	8382 7530
Mater Imaging	25 Rocklands Road CROWS NEST	9955 4466
PRP Norwest	11 Norbrik Drive BELLA VISTA	8882 8822
Synergy Rouse Hill	40 Panmure Street ROUSE HILL	8602 5400

Partially Eligible MRI	Address	Phone
Alfred Drummoyne (1.5T)	169 Victoria Rd DRUMMOYNE	9911 6800
PRP Moore Park	Byron Kennedy Hall MOORE PARK	8323 6599
Synergy Campsie (1.5T)	17-21 Campsie St, CAMPSIE	9789 3033
Spectrum Alexandria	540 Botany Rd ALEXANDRIA	9197 8000
Upright MRI (1.5T)	3 Colo Lane BLACKTOWN	1300 674 722

ALL NSW MRI locations and their Medicare eligibility are listed at:

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/di-mri-eligunits-nsw>

I've booked a scan. What do I do next?

- 1) You need to book in for a review appointment at the Clinic for the Doctor to review the films and interpret the report. You need an appointment for this, as *results won't be provided over the phone or via email.*
- 2) The Radiology practice will provide an electronic report to the doctor within a few days of the scan. As Dr Samra is trained on interpreting your MRI, you will be told if you need to wait for the report before your review if your problem requires higher level analysis with a radiologist report.
- 3) Although the doctor uses a Computerised Viewer, it is best to also bring the films to your review appointment. A report is never sufficient on its own and doctor reviews all images personally.