

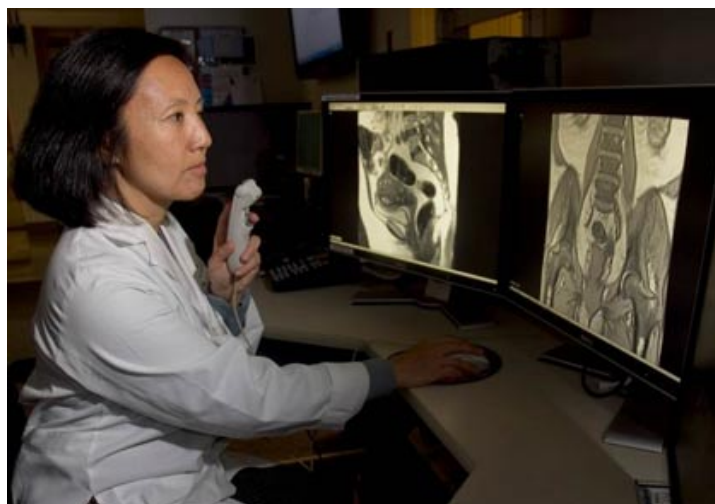


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MRI Safety During Pregnancy

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

If you are pregnant and your doctor wants to perform a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) exam, there is a possibility that your doctor is concerned about your health or the health of your baby.



Illness during pregnancy

In general, doctors try to delay treating a medical problem, if possible, until after pregnancy. Therefore, if your doctor orders an MRI during your pregnancy, he/she is trying to address a potentially urgent or serious illness.

Why do you need an MRI?

Your doctor may order an MRI if you have symptoms that require treatment or exam results that need clarification but cannot wait until after the delivery of your baby.

There are many reasons why you may need an MRI, but your doctor can explain the type of information he/she is seeking from the exam. You should inquire about your doctor's concerns and the need for this medical imaging exam.

Ultrasound is the most commonly used imaging exam during pregnancy. It usually focuses on the baby in the womb. However, when ultrasound does not provide a clear answer, or if other parts of your body need to be imaged, an MRI is usually performed.

MRI does not use x-rays. It uses radio waves and a powerful magnet to acquire images.

Over the last 30 years, thousands of pregnant women have had MRI exams, and no one has found any harm to the baby.

What to expect during the MRI exam?

Your exam will focus on imaging a particular body part, such as the baby in the pelvis, the brain or the spine. Scanning time varies depending on the body part being imaged; however, most exams will require that you lie still for 20 to 40 minutes.

Contrast material

For some MRI exams, a contrast material called gadolinium will need to be injected into a vein in the arm.

While contrast material sometimes improves the MRI images, during pregnancy the exam will typically be performed without contrast material, and a radiologist (a doctor with expertise in medical imaging) will review the images. Contrast material will be used for the exam only if it is necessary to answer your doctor's question.

MRI during pregnancy

In the end, the most important factor in having a healthy baby is ensuring a healthy mom, because the baby depends on mom to stay well and carry her pregnancy through.

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