

MRI's - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Your health care provider just recommended an MRI for you or your loved one. And while you're probably relieved that answers to your health problems are on the horizon, you also might have questions:

Why an MRI?

How does an MRI work?

What can it reveal?

And just how much will it cost?

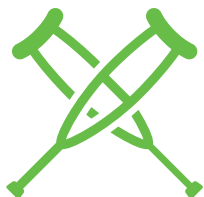
With so many diagnostic tests available today, it can be hard to understand why you need one vs. another.

What is an MRI?

An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) uses a large magnet and radio waves to create detailed 3D images of your body from many angles. Unlike a CT scan (or CAT scan), which uses X-rays to view bones, an MRI does not use radiation and is used to view soft tissues, such as organs, ligaments, tendons, the spinal cord and the brain.

READ ON TO LEARN:

- Why your health care provider may want you to schedule an MRI
- What you can expect during the procedure
- How you can help limit your out-of-pocket expenses

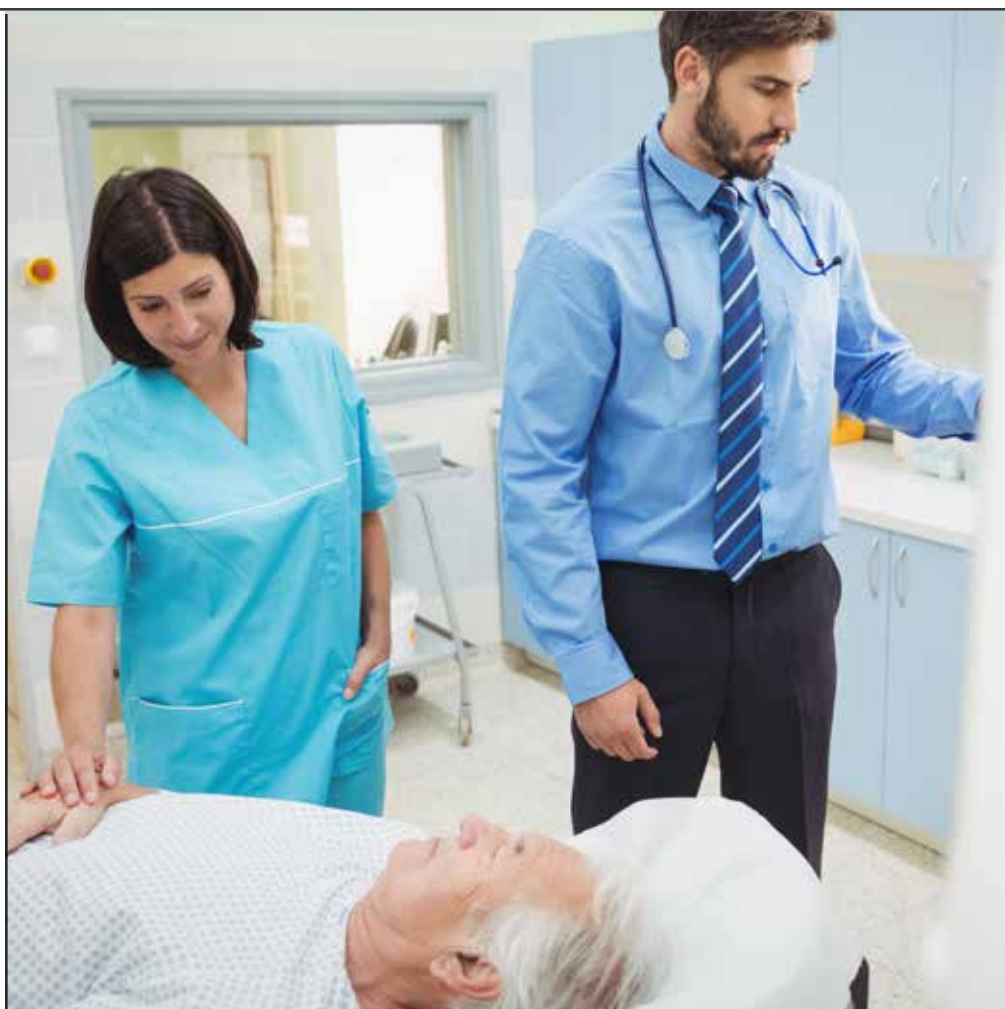


Why would you need an MRI?

MRIs are used to diagnose many problems, from torn ligaments to tumors. It's a non-invasive way to generate high-resolution images of the inside of your body.

Some of the most common reasons people receive MRIs are:

- Tumors
- Heart or lung damage
- Eye or ear problems
- Sports injuries
- Problems with your spine
- Problems with your veins or arteries
- Brain abnormalities
- Abdominal/digestive tract problems
- Bone diseases and conditions
- Pelvic or prostate problems



How do you prepare for an MRI?

Although there are usually no preparations required before an MRI, you may be asked to avoid eating or drinking for a few hours beforehand. It's important to follow all instructions and do the following the day of the procedure:

- Remove anything that might affect the magnetic imaging or injure you by moving or shifting during the procedure. This includes jewelry, hair accessories, glasses, underwire bras, removable dentures, hearing aids, makeup and nail polish.
- Tell your technician if you have any drug patches or tattoos. They can cause skin irritation or burns during the procedure.
- Tell your technician if you are (or may be) pregnant.
- Tell your technician if you have any implanted devices.
- Tell your technician if small spaces make you feel uncomfortable.

What can you expect during your MRI?

During an MRI, you lie down on a narrow table, which slides into a large tunnel-shaped scanner. The procedure usually takes 15-60 minutes. It's important to lay completely still so the images are not blurry.

A special dye may be injected through a vein before the procedure starts. This can help improve the quality and details of the images for certain types of MRIs.

While the scan itself does not cause any discomfort, it's very noisy, which can be stressful. And even though the machine is not completely closed, you may feel claustrophobic if tight spaces make you anxious. Try to relax and take slow, deep breaths, and ask your technician if you can listen to music or wear earplugs if you think it might help calm you. An intercom in the room should allow you to speak to someone at any time.

If you're extremely nervous, you may be given medication to help you feel sleepy and less anxious, or your health care provider may suggest an open MRI, in which the machine is not as close to your body.



After the procedure is over, the images will be sent to a radiologist who will analyze them and report the findings to the health care provider who ordered your MRI. Your provider will discuss the results and next steps, if necessary, with you. There typically is no recovery period or restrictions after the procedure, unless you were given a sedative.



Where can you get an MRI?

For decades, MRIs were only conducted at hospitals, but today there are stand-alone imaging centers that specialize in MRIs and similar diagnostic procedures. Health care providers often recommend a particular hospital because they have an affiliation or long-standing relationship with the organization. However, **a specialized imaging center may be a quicker, more convenient choice.** And today's patients have the freedom to choose the facility that works best for them in terms of both convenience and price.



“More than ever, consumers can have a tangible impact on their own wallet share in health care by making more optimal choices on where and how to get care.”

*Barton R. Halling,
Director of Activation
Strategies for UMR*



**To learn more about
MRIs, visit the
Health Education Library
on [umar.com](https://www.umar.com).**

How much does an MRI cost?

The price of an MRI can vary from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the type of MRI you need.

Other factors that can impact the price include:

- **WHERE YOU LIVE**

The same type of MRI may cost more or less depending on whether it occurs in a rural, urban or suburban area.

- **WHERE THE FACILITY IS LOCATED**

Costs can vary among similar facilities located just miles apart.

- **WHAT TYPE OF FACILITY YOU CHOOSE**

Hospitals have more overhead costs than standalone imaging centers, and this could be reflected in higher costs of services for patients.

- **THE REPUTATION OF THE FACILITY IN THE MARKET**

Some people are willing to pay more for a better consumer experience, whether it's upscale décor or a reputation for good bedside manner.

“It's important to remember that you have the power – and the right – to discuss your options with your health care provider and lead the decision-making process,” says Barton R. Halling, Director of Activation Strategies for UMR. “Educated, informed consumers inevitably make better purchasing decisions.”

How can you get the best price?

Unfortunately, it's difficult to simply call up a facility and find out how much an MRI will cost you. Variables such as the type of health coverage you carry, whether you've met your deductible or out-of-pocket limits, your co-insurance, your provider network's negotiated rate with the facility, and whether you visit an in-network or out-of-network provider, can all influence the final cost.

Fortunately, UMR can help take some of the guesswork out of the equation – and put the purchasing power back into your hands. Visit [umar.com](https://www.umar.com) to access tools, such as the Health cost estimator, to find out how much you are likely to pay for an MRI or other procedure before your appointment.

CLICK THE LINK TO TAKE A SHORT QUIZ TO PROVE COMPLETION:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RM255C6>