

## Magnetic Resonance (MR) Defecography

### Patient Information Guide

This guide covers what you need to do to get the best MRI exam of your pelvic floor, rectum, and sphincter. The guide includes the following:

- Description of MRI defecography (MRI of the pelvic floor, rectum and sphincter)
- How to prepare for your MRI defecography
- What to expect during your MRI defecography
- What happens after your MRI defecography
- The MRI safety screening process

Please use this guide to answer questions you might have about MR Defecography (also known as MRI of the pelvic floor, rectum and sphincter). Someone from the MRI staff will call you a few days before your exam to answer questions and talk about how to prepare for your exam.

#### **Medical Words Used in this Guide**

Some words in this guide might be new to you. Let's go over what those words mean.

**Bowel:** Another name for intestines, the part of the body where digestion takes place. When you eat food, it passes through your bowel (small intestine) where it is converted into energy your body needs.

**Defecate:** When you pass solid waste from your body through your rear end. Also known as "moving your bowels".

**Enema:** Injection of a fluid into the rectum ("rear end") to cause a bowel movement.

**MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging):** A type of imaging exam where patients are put into a large magnet that is connected to a computer. The magnet sends a signal to special coils that are placed like a blanket on the part of the body that doctors want to look at. The magnet signal passes through the coils and is picked up by the computer. The computer converts the signal into the pictures the doctors will use to look at your bowel.

#### **Important Contact Info**

If you have any questions or concerns about your MR defecography exam or what is in this guide, call the MRI Department at 617-732-7970.

**What is MR Defecography?**

MR Defecography (also known as MRI of the pelvic floor, rectum and sphincter) is an imaging exam that doctors use to look at problems in the structure of the pelvic floor or problems with how these muscles are working when you move your bowels. MR Defecography is done in an MRI machine.

**How do I prepare for MR Defecography?**

There is no prep for an MR Defecography exam. It is okay for you to eat, drink, and take your medications as normal.

**What should I expect during the exam?**

MR Defecography lasts about 30 minutes. Some patients feel a small amount of discomfort from bloating or cramping during the exam.

Please arrive at the MRI Department 15 minutes before your scheduled exam. You will change into a hospital gown and put on an adult diaper. This is so you can move your bowels while the MRI takes pictures of the muscles in your pelvic floor.

An MRI staff person will bring you into the scanner room and you will lie on your side on the MRI table. A doctor will then gently insert gel into your rectum through a small enema tip. You will then be asked to turn onto your belly or back and you will stay in that position for the rest of the exam. A set of MRI signal detectors, called an imaging coil, will be placed on your belly or back like a blanket. The imaging coil receives the signal from the magnet and sends the signal to the computer to produce the images of your pelvic floor.

After positioning you in the MRI scanner, the MRI staff will move to the scanner control room that is right next to the room you will be in. MRI staff will be able to see you and hear you at all times. You will also be given a call button in case you need to speak with the staff at anytime during the exam.

When the exam begins, the MRI scanner will make repeated knocking sounds as it is taking the pictures of your pelvis. You will be given earplugs or headphones to lessen the sound. At times during the exam, the MRI staff person will ask you to “bear down”, “relax”, or “hold in”. You will also be asked to defecate into the diaper so that a doctor can observe how your rectum empties.

**Are there any risks with MR Defecography?**

There are no risks associated with MR Defecography. Some patients feel mild bloating or cramping from the air that enters the rectum when the gel is inserted. This feeling will lessen each time you pass gas. Most patients can return to normal activities after leaving the MRI department. Check with your doctor for any special instructions you may need to follow.

**What happens after my MR Defecography?**

After the exam is complete, the staff will bring you to a private restroom and you will be given a washcloth and towel to wash up. Feel free to ask the MRI staff people for help if you need it.

A special doctor called a radiologist will look at the images taken during your exam and write a report that will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss the results with you.

**What is the MRI safety screening process?**

You will receive a phone call from an MRI Department staff person a few days before your exam. This call is to find out if you have any metal implants in your body or if you worked with metal in the past. Some versions of the following items cannot be brought into the MRI room, so it is important that you inform the MRI staff if you have any of the following in your body:

- Pacemaker
- Defibrillator
- Aneurysm clip
- Hearing devices/Cochlear implants
- Heart valve implants
- Wire mesh implant
- Have worked with metal in the past

You will also be asked if you have a history of kidney disease. This is so the staff will know if it is safe to give you the contrast agent. If you have a history of kidney disease, you may need a blood test to find out if you can safely undergo the exam.