

MR ARTHROGRAM



What is an arthrogram and why am I having one?

A MR arthrogram is a diagnostic procedure performed in conjunction with an MRI (CT or X-ray are occasionally used) to evaluate joints, most commonly the shoulder, knee, hip, wrist, elbow and ankle. Other tissues (cartilage, tendons, and ligaments) support and cushion your joints. A MR arthrogram helps the doctor (radiologist) see small tears or other problems in these tissues. The result of this exam will help guide your treatment.

How does it work?

The radiologist will numb the area with a local anesthetic. When the area is numb, a needle will be inserted into the joint using the X-ray image as a guide and then contrast will be injected. After the injection you may need additional x-ray images before having your MRI. You should plan for the entire exam to take approximately 1.5 to 2 hours.

The contrast material generally consists of both a standard iodine solution, which is detected by X-ray and a solution of gadolinium which aids in the MRI images. The contrast is then absorbed by the lining of the joint into the bloodstream and excreted by the kidneys within a few hours of injection.

How do I prepare?

There are no special preparations. If you have had prior x-rays please bring a copy with you on the day of your exam or you may need to have them repeated.

What happens after the procedure?

You may resume normal daily activities with the exception of athletic activities, which should be avoided for 24 hours.

You may experience some discomfort and swelling of the joint for a day or two after the arthrogram. If you have symptoms of pain, swelling, redness, itching, burning, or if the area is warm to the touch or you have a fever, please call your physician right away. Joint infection is a rare problem after this exam, but if it occurs it should be treated immediately.

Questions? Your questions are important. Call your doctor if you have questions or concerns about your exam.