



# Cardiac MRI / MRA

## Patient Instructions

### What is a Cardiac MRI/MRA?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging, or MRI, is a diagnostic test that uses a strong magnetic field and high frequency radio waves to capture detailed pictures of certain anatomy inside the body. Unlike x-rays or CT scans, MRI's do not use ionizing radiation. A cardiac MRI/MRA is a specialized scan that will produce detailed images to assess the different parts of the heart.

### How should I prepare for this MRI/MRA?

- No food 4 hours prior to exam.
- Water is okay to drink! Please stay well-hydrated with fluids.
- Are you claustrophobic? Bring your sedative with you, and do not take it until the MRI technologist or nurse instructs you to do so. You will need a friend or family member to drive you home after your MRI.
- Absolutely no children allowed in the testing area, please arrange childcare.

### What should I expect the day of my test?

Check in at the Lower Level of the Alaska Heart Institute at your scheduled appointment time.

**BEFORE THE SCAN:** An MRI technologist will do a routine safety screening, and then you will then be asked to change into a gown. For comfort, you can bring a pair of sweatpants or any other bottoms with no metal to wear for your test as well. We will have lockers available where you can secure your belongings for your duration of your MRI. One IV will also be placed in your arm for the administration of the MRI contrast dye.

**DURING THE SCAN:** The length of time you will be laying on the MRI table will depend on what type of MR scan you will need. MRA's take about 10 minutes, whereas some MRI scans can take 45 minutes or more (this time can vary, depending on how many pictures that must be taken). Your choice in music will also be played for you over the set of headphones you will be wearing. A heart monitor will be attached to your chest area, along with a large pad. You will have to follow along with breath hold instructions for your test, which will be given to you by the MRI technologist. Keep in mind that you will have full communication with the person conducting your scan. While the scanner is taking your pictures, you will hear rapidly repeating, loud thumping noises coming from the walls of the MRI tunnel.

**AFTER THE SCAN:** You won't have any restrictions following your MRI and you may resume your normal daily activities, unless you took a sedative. It is important that you arrive in a timely fashion and prepared for your test.

Tardiness may result in rescheduling so that other patients are not inconvenienced. If you request or your insurance requires you to have testing at another facility, we would be happy to help arrange this test at your preferred providers location.

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