Claustrophobia and MRI: Reducing Anxiety During Your Examination

• We offer safe, complimentary transportation services to your MRI appointment.
• We provide pre-certification services and convenient payment plans to remove financial worries from the maximum patient comfort.
• The compassion and caring of our staff is spectacular.

Most claustrophobic patients are able to frightened to go on. Right to stop the test if you become too frightened. Otherwise, you can do this, it is a good idea to have the imaging center dispense medications to you. It is also important to note the necessity of lying still in a confined space for a long time.

Most patients feel more confident when they know what their MRI options are. The radiologist will design the testing protocol to thoroughly address these in many different shapes and some have special capabilities.

The technologist will make you as comfortable as possible for your examination. You a comfortable position on the examination table. You possible pillows will be included in this section, so it is a good idea to address these issues with your support person before your visit. The support person will be accompanying you into the scan room. The support person will be in the technologist’s control area if you squeeze it for help. If you need assistance. Please notify the imaging center in advance so no medical conditions that will prevent them from accompanying you into the scan room. The support person will be in the technologist’s control area if you squeeze it for help.

Some patients require a more personalized plan for control of their anxiety. The technologist may employ a variety of strategies to manage your anxiety.

Testing protocol
• Communication
• Medication
• Music
• Plan strategies for managing anxiety at the plan strategies for managing anxiety at the plan strategies for managing anxiety at the appointment. Listening to music will not inhibit your ability to communicate with the technologist during the appointment. Planning strategies for managing anxiety at the appointment is an excellent strategy to ensure you are feeling well physically. There is a two-way microphone frequently during the test to offer encouraging words, provide reassurance, and keep you informed on what is happening in the machine. Patients generally experience less anxiety if they meet and speak to you. Your MRI options
• 4. Second-generation open MRI scanners
• 5. Third-generation open MRI scanners
• 6. High-field strength MRI scanners

There are four basic types of MRI scanners. All MRI scanners are different; they come in many different shapes and some have special capabilities. Before you even schedule your MRI appointment, it is a good idea to research some of the options available in your community. Not all MRI scanners are the same; they come in many different shapes and some have special capabilities.

The technologist will make you as comfortable as possible. Bring a CD of something that you find relaxing with you to the examination. Some centers will allow you to listen to your favorite music through headphones during the examination. Bring a CD of something that you find relaxing with you to the examination. Some centers will allow you to listen to your favorite music through headphones during the examination.

Some centers will allow you to listen to your favorite music through headphones during the examination. Music can help patients remain calm and mentally occupied. Music can make the time go faster. If you are prone to claustrophobia or panic attacks, or are in the presence, but you won’t be able to talk with your support person. You cannot drive yourself to or from your appointment. Call the imaging center on the day of your appointment to find out the protocol for taking your sedative. Some centers offer sedation for MRI examinations, because it is very difficult to do this, it is a good idea to have the imaging center dispense medications to you. It is also important to note the necessity of lying still in a confined space for a long time.
What is claustrophobia?

Claustrophobia is the fear of confined spaces. Claustrophobic patients will often experience severe anxiety or panic attacks in small spaces, such as an elevator or airplane. People who are already prone to having panic attacks will often develop claustrophobia. A person suffering from a claustrophobic panic attack might find it difficult to breathe, feel overheated and sweat profusely, become nauseated, have a dry mouth, experience heart palpitations, and become fearful that he or she is unable to escape the situation.

Studies have shown that between 5 percent and 10.6 percent of people screened before an MRI scan had claustrophobia. Furthermore, it was found that 7 percent of patients had previously unidentified claustrophobia and needed to terminate the scanning procedure prematurely. About 30 percent of patients reported milder distress caused by the necessity of lying still in a confined space for a long time.

Claustrophobia is a serious problem that prevents many patients from having a medically necessary MRI scan. This brochure will describe strategies for minimizing the anxiety associated with claustrophobia and successfully completing your scan.

Your MRI options

Before you even schedule your MRI appointment, it is a good idea to research some of the options available in your community. Not all MRI scanners are the same; they come in many different shapes and have special capabilities. Choosing a machine that is less intimidating to you is the first step toward successful completion of your MRI scan.

There are four basic types of MRI scanners:

1. Traditional closed type (the most confining)
2. Closed short-bore (sometimes referred to as “open” bore)
3. First-generation open scanners
4. Second-generation open scanners

Plan on visiting your MRI provider ahead of time

Sometimes it can help to visit the imaging facility before your appointment. Avoiding any surprises on the day of your scan is an important way to control your anxiety, and a visit to the center can help ensure that your appointment is stress-free. On this visit you will:

• Verify that you have no medical conditions that would prevent you from having an MRI scan, such as a pacemaker or implanted defibrillator;
• See what the scanner looks like;
• Meet members of the technical staff;
• Discuss your concerns about the procedure; and
• Plan strategies for managing anxiety at the appointment.

Patients generally experience less anxiety if they meet and establish trust with a staff member ahead of time. If visiting the center is impractical, then calling the center for information may also be a helpful way to establish this connection before your appointment.
How the Technologists Can Help

Imaging technologists assist patients with claustrophobia every day — after all, 30 percent of their patients experience some level of distress while having an MRI examination. The technologist may employ a variety of strategies to calm you during the procedure, including the following:

• **Education about the procedure**
  Most patients feel more confident when they know what to expect. The technologist will describe the expected length of the examination, how the test is broken down into several smaller parts, and whether an intravenous contrast agent will be needed.

• **Ensuring your physical comfort**
  The technologist will make you as comfortable as possible before getting started. You will be offered a warm blanket if needed. Although some exams require special positioning, whenever possible pillows will be used to help move you into a comfortable position on the examination table. You may be given hearing protection to help muffle the knocking and tapping sounds made by the machine. Some patients find it helpful if the lights are dimmed, or even choose to place a cool washcloth over their eyes. If you regularly take medicines to control pain or body aches, it is a good idea to take this medicine shortly before the appointment time to prevent discomfort from disrupting your examination.

• **Communication**
  A window in the scan room allows the technologist to see you at all times during the examination. He or she will speak to you frequently during the test to offer encouraging words, provide instructions, advise you of the time remaining, and confirm that you are feeling well physically. There is a two-way microphone in the scanner and the technologist will be able to hear you if you ask for help. You will also be provided with an emergency call alarm, which makes a very loud noise in the technologist’s control area if you squeeze it for help.

• **Testing protocol**
  The radiologist will design the testing protocol to thoroughly review all of the important anatomy. Some radiologists will approve an abbreviated version of the normal protocol to shorten the examination time if you are having difficulty with anxiety or pain. It may be helpful to ask the imaging center about their policies on this before the day of your appointment.

30% of patients experience some level of distress during an MRI examination.
**Other Forms of Support**

Some patients require a more personalized plan for controlling anxiety. Imaging center policies vary on the topics included in this section, so it is a good idea to address these options with the center before your appointment.

**Music**

Some centers will allow you to listen to your favorite music through headphones during the examination. Bring a CD of something that you find relaxing with you to the appointment. Listening to music will not inhibit your ability to communicate with the technologist during the scan; the music will be muted when the technologist is speaking to you.

**A support person**

Some patients find it comforting to bring a friend or family member into the room for support. If you plan to do this, it is a good idea to have the imaging center pre-screen your support person to ensure he or she has no medical conditions that will prevent them from accompanying you into the scan room. The support person will be able to maintain physical contact (hold hands or touch your arm) to reassure you of their presence, but you won’t be able to talk with your support person during the examination.

If there are no family members or friends available at your appointment time, some centers can supply a staff member to remain in the scan room with you. It is important to notify the imaging center of this request in advance, to ensure someone will be available to assist when you need it.

**Medication**

Many patients find that a mild sedative is relaxing and helpful in easing anxiety. Patients are not given heavy sedation for MRI examinations, because it is very difficult to monitor vital signs within the magnetic field around the MRI scanner. If you wish to take a mild sedative for your examination, you will need to discuss this with your referring physician and obtain a prescription prior to the date of your appointment. The imaging center cannot prescribe or dispense medications to you. It is also important to note the following when taking sedatives to relieve anxiety:

- Sedatives require time to produce their full effect on the body and should be taken as prescribed by your pharmacist. You may find it helpful to speak to the pharmacist about your MRI exam so that he or she can give you specific time(s) to take your medication. It is a good idea to call the imaging center on the day of your appointment to ensure that their schedule is running “on time” before taking your sedative.

- Sedatives can make you tired and will impair your reflexes. You cannot drive yourself to or from your appointment when taking this type of medication. Some centers offer free transportation services for patients that need this assistance. Please notify the imaging center in advance so they can ensure you receive prompt service from the transportation provider.

- Sedatives may make it difficult to complete registration forms and answer important questions about your medical history. Some patients choose to complete this paperwork before the appointment to avoid this inconvenience. Often registration paperwork can be faxed or mailed to you prior to the appointment, so you can bring the completed paperwork with you on the day of your exam.
Remember – You Are in Control

Taking personal control of your MRI appointment is an excellent strategy to manage your anxiety. You have the right to choose the best center to meet your needs, and you have the right to stop the test if you become too frightened to go on.

Most claustrophobic patients are able to successfully complete their MRI scans, with the help of a caring staff of professionals and a little preparation before the appointment.

Why ProScan Imaging Is the Right Choice for Claustrophobic Patients

- The compassion and caring of our staff is spectacular. How do we know? Because 99.7% of our patients would recommend us to others!
- We offer MRI scanners with a truly open design for maximum patient comfort.
- We offer abbreviated protocols when needed to achieve patient compliance with the MRI examination.
- We provide pre-certification services and convenient payment plans to remove financial worries from the equation.
- We offer safe, complimentary transportation services to assist the sedated patient.

To arrange a visit to ProScan Imaging or to discuss your MRI appointment, please call 1-877-PROSCAN (776-7226)
Or go to our website: www.proscan.com.
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For more information about choosing the right MRI scanner

or scheduling an appointment, please call:

1-877-PROSCAN (776-7226)