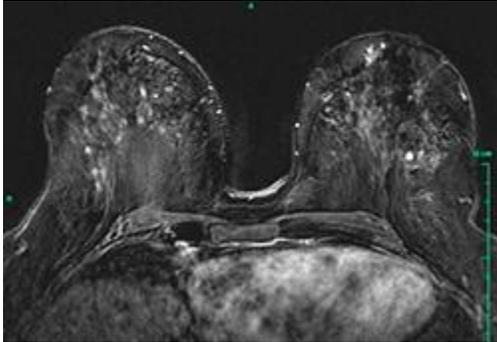


Breast MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

An MRI is a painless procedure in which radio waves and powerful magnets linked to a computer are used to create detailed images of areas inside the body without using radiation. MRI is a supplemental tool to help diagnose breast cancer and has been approved by the FDA for about a decade.



MRI is the most reliable method to evaluate for rupture or leakage for women who have breast implants.

MRI is useful for patients with dense breast tissue, scar tissue from a prior lumpectomy site or abnormalities that can be felt but are not visible with mammography or ultrasound. It is useful to determine whether breast cancer has spread to the chest wall, which may affect treatment. It is also helpful to distinguish if a cancer is limited to one area or is “multifocal,” involving more than one area.

MRI is many times used for women at high risk, such as:

- Women with a prior history for breast cancer.
- Women who have a first-degree relative with breast cancer such as mother, sister or daughter.
- Damage to one of the BRCA genes (found in specialized blood testing).

How to Prepare: Personal items such as watches, rings, necklaces, credit cards with magnetic strips or any items that contain metal should be left at home or removed prior to the MRI scan.

What to Expect: You will be asked to wear a hospital gown for the procedure. You will lie on your stomach on a table during the scan. The breasts will be placed through an opening on the table, which contains coils that detect the magnetic signal. The table is moved into a tubelike machine that contains the magnet. You will hear the equipment making a muffled thumping sound for several minutes. There is no pain involved with an MRI. After several images have been taken, you may be given a contrast agent (dye) intravenously. The contrast is not radioactive. Contrast is used to improve the ability to view any tumors. Additional images are then taken. The entire procedure takes approximately one hour.

Your Results: After the exam, the radiologist will interpret the images and send a report to your healthcare provider.