

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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# Preparing for your child's MRI scan



This is likely to be a long day for you. We understand that your child will be tired and hungry and you may be worried about how your child will cope.

You will be able to take your child to the playroom, which is set up with different activities. If there are no toys suitable for your child to play with, please speak to your nurse.

We understand that this is a difficult day for you as you may be anxious about your child needing sedation and also the results from the scan. We will do what we can to support you. If possible we recommend someone you know coming to help you (for at least the first half of the day) until your child is scanned.

It is helpful if your child is tired when they are given the medicine. If they do not normally have a sleep in the day please do what you can to make them tired; for example keep them up late the night before the scan.

You will need to plan to be in hospital all day, so please ensure any other children you have are being looked after as you will not be ready to go home until the evening, or 4 to 6 hours after the medicine is given.

Your child's safety is our first concern. Please ask if there is anything you are worried about.

## What is sedation?

Sedation is a medicine normally given by mouth to help your child go to sleep and reduce any fear or anxiety. It is a very safe and well tolerated treatment.

If your child is having a scan they may need sedation because they have to lie completely still for between 15 and 40 minutes to get the best pictures (the length of the scan depends on the body area your child needs scanning). Sedation is normally needed for children aged 4 months to 7 years.

When given by mouth, it is important that they swallow most of the medicine to ensure they stay asleep for the scan. If there is a reason why we cannot give the medicine by mouth, or the first medicine fails, we can give a different medicine, which we will discuss with you.

**We only need to use a needle if an extra procedure has been requested to give clearer pictures (contrast scanning).** It is very rare that we need to do this.

## **What will happen before you go to hospital?**

A nurse will try to contact you by phone to explore any concerns, but this may not always be possible. If you do not receive a phone call it is usually because we do not have your correct phone number. If you have particular questions or concerns, you can contact Ward 25 or the MRI department and leave a message for your nurse with your correct number (contact numbers are towards the end of this leaflet).

**For safety reasons, your child will need to stop eating 6 hours before they are given sedation, and only have water to drink until 10.30am.**

**If your baby is breast fed they will need to stop taking solids for 6 hours and breast milk for 4 hours before the scan.**

Your appointment letter states that your child may **not eat or drink after the time stated** so please follow these instructions. As your child will have a long day it helps if they have eaten breakfast before the time stated.

**If you have answered yes to any of the safety questions on the MRI safety questionnaire please contact the MRI department on 01623 622515, extension 6190.**

## **Important consent information for children undergoing procedures requiring sedation**

Consent is always required before a health professional can examine or treat a child below the age of 16 years. The procedure will be fully explained to you (and if appropriate your child) and you will be asked to sign the consent form as we need **written** consent before we can proceed with your child's procedure.

Please note that to give consent for a child the person **must have** parental responsibility. A person with parental responsibility will be:

1. The child's mother.
2. The child's birth father if married to the mother
3. An unmarried birth father:
  - a. If the child was born **after** 1 December 2003 and he is registered on the birth certificate.
  - b. If the child was born **before** 1 December 2003 and he:
    - Marries the mother.
    - Makes a parental responsibility agreement with the mother through the court.
    - Obtains a parental responsibility order from the court.
    - Obtains a residence order from the court.
    - Becomes the child's guardian after the mother's death.

4. A non-parent who:
  - a. Becomes the child's guardian if those with parental responsibility for the child have died.
  - b. Obtains a residence order from the court which requires that the child lives with them.
  - c. Adopts the child (please bring adoption documents and any medical history given to you at the time of adoption).
5. For children who are in local authority care the named social worker will know who can give consent.

## When you get to the ward

Please arrive on the ward at the time stated on the letter. Your nurse will need to complete some paperwork with you and a doctor will need talk to you, assess your child and gain your consent to the scan.

**Please try to keep your child awake to ensure they are really tired for their scan. This will also help the sedative medicine work better (if needed).**

There are often two children needing scans on the same day - the youngest usually goes first because they are most likely to be ready to go sleep. The first child is normally given sedative medicine (if needed) just before the time they go to the scan department and the second child will be given medicine when the first child returns to the ward.

After the medication is given, your child can go to sleep. **Please bring with you anything that will help your child go to sleep. Your child may become quite floppy after the medication so please take extra care to ensure they do not hurt themselves.** After they have been given the medication a porter will arrive to take you, your child and your nurse to the MRI department.

A lot of children go to sleep on the journey to the imaging department, but if they do not go to sleep they may need to be given a second dose of a different medicine, but your nurse will discuss this with you first.

## During the scan

Your child will be closely monitored while they are asleep and during the scan. A trained nurse will be in the scan room with you and your child.

When the scan is complete you will be taken back to the ward. Your child will continue to be monitored while asleep. Please do not leave your child without speaking to the nurse first. It may be a good idea to bring lunch with you although drinks are available on the ward.

## After the scan

**Your child will need to be in hospital for 4 to 6 hours after the scan before they can go home.**

Your child must be awake, eating and drinking, passing urine and considered safe to leave the ward before you can go home, so please arrange for childcare for any other children you have.

For children that need a second dose of medication they occasionally stay asleep all night, which means you will not be able to take them home until the next morning.

It's best to allow your child to "sleep off" the medication naturally. If you wake them before they are ready, they often feel very groggy and miserable and are probably not safe to go home.

Most children wake between 2 and 4 hours after the medication is given. Your child is likely to remain slightly floppy for 24 to 48 hours after the medication, so please take extra care to ensure they do not fall and hurt themselves. We recommend that your child does not go to school the day after the scan.

## What can go wrong?

The medicine that we give for sedation is well tested and very safe. As with all medicines, there is very small risk of adverse effects.

One thing that could happen very rarely is that your child may get too sleepy and breathe too slowly, therefore needing help with their breathing. This is more likely if they are ill on the day, have had a previous reaction to similar medicines, or are taking other medicines at the same time that might interfere. Because of this, it's really important to you tell us about these things before sedation is given. If your child is poorly on the day, it may be necessary to reschedule the scan; the doctor will assess your child to ensure they are well enough to have sedation.

Some children are not sleepy even after the sedation, and may get upset causing the scan to be delayed. This is not anyone's fault but does happen commonly with children of all ages.

Please ask a nurse or doctor if you have any other concerns about the scan or sedation.

You can get further information from:

- Ward 25 (Paediatric Department)  
King's Mill Hospital  
Telephone: 01623 622515, extension 6180 or 6182 (ask if it is possible to speak to your nurse).
- MRI Department, King's Mill Hospital  
Telephone: 01623 622515, extension 6190 or 6187.

### Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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