

MAGNETIC RESONANCE CHOLANGIOPANCREATOGRAM (MRCP)

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WHAT IS A MAGNETIC RESONANCE CHOLANGIOPANCREATOGRAM (MRCP)?

MRCP is a special type of MRI. It uses computer software that specifically images pancreatic and bile ducts, which are often the site of tumors. Fluid naturally present in the ducts serves as a contrast substance. This form of MRI can also detect gallstones in the common bile duct. MRCP may be used to diagnose an alternative cause of jaundice or elevated liver function such as bile duct stones, tumors in the small bowel near the opening of the bile and pancreatic duct, or pancreatic tumors.

No contrast is administered during the MRCP exam.

WHAT TO EXPECT

For this exam, you will be asked to lie down on the scanning table, feet-first with arms at your side. Coils (special devices to improve image quality) will be placed around the region of your body being scanned. The scanning table will slide your whole body into the magnet. During the scan you will not feel anything, but will hear intermittent humming, thumping, clicking and knocking sounds. Earplugs or headphones will be provided to help mask the noise. You must be still during the exam, because movement causes blurred images. You may be told to hold your breath for short periods of time.

The scan takes approximately 45 minutes. The technologist will give you discharge instructions after the completion of the test.

HOW TO PREPARE

Follow these guidelines:

- **You must have nothing to eat or drink- including medications- for 6 hours prior to your scan.**
- Please bring your current home medications or a list of your medications with you the day of the test.
- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and to change into a hospital gown.
- You will be required to remove all objects that are not compatible with the MRI scanner.

Patients who might have metal objects in certain parts of their bodies may also require an x-ray prior to an MRI. You should notify the technologist or radiologist of any shrapnel, bullets, or other pieces of metal which may be present in your body due to accidents. Foreign bodies near the eyes are particularly important. Plain film x-ray clearance will be done for any question of metal foreign bodies to your eyes.

If you have claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces) or anxiety you can be sedated for your exam. Please remember that you must have a driver with you at your appointment time in order to receive sedation. All of our medications for sedation are given by mouth. We are only staffed to sedate until 3:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. If your appointment is scheduled after 3:00 p.m. you will need to ask your physician for a prescription for a mild sedative. All sedation requires a driver.

RESULTS

A radiologist will review your images and send a report to your doctor who ordered the test in 48 hours. You'll get a call from your doctor's office to discuss the results and next steps. To check your results in our secure, online patient portal, My UNC Chart, visit www.myuncchart.org.