

Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography (MRCP)

What is Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography MRCP?

Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography (MRCP) is performed in the Radiology department using MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) technology to scan the body to obtain images. The scan produces images of the liver, gallbladder, bile ducts, pancreas, and pancreatic ducts. MRCP is a diagnostic tool that creates images that can help diagnose disorders in the liver, gallbladder, bile ducts, pancreas, and pancreatic duct area.

How do I prepare for an MRCP?

An MRCP is used to detect abnormalities within the abdomen. The magnetic fields used in MRCP are not known to be harmful, and MRCP is painless. However, because of how MRCP works, metal in or on your body can affect the MRCP pictures. The MRI staff will ask you to remove any jewelry and other accessories before the MRI scan. The MRI staff will interview you briefly before the scan about other implanted metal or electronic devices and determine if you are safe to have an MRCP scan.

Be sure to tell your provider and MRI technologist if you have any of the following:

- Cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator
- Artificial heart valve
- Insulin pump or other infusion pumps
- Inner ear implant
- Clips used for brain aneurysms
- Metal coils placed within blood vessels
- Metal, electronic, or magnetic items in or on your body

Be sure to tell your provider and MRI technologist if you have any of the following:

- Let your provider or MRI staff know if you are pregnant or nursing.
- Please stop eating and drinking for four hours before your MRCP.
- Medications may be taken with a sip of water.

What are the potential complications?

An MRCP test is a non-invasive test that poses a little risk; however, some minor complications include:

- Undesired side effects from anesthesia.
- Allergic reaction if contrast is used during the test.
- Complications from unrelated diseases.

What should I expect during the MRCP?

- You will be positioned on the moveable exam table. Straps and bolsters may be used to help you stay still and maintain your position.
- The table will slide into a large, tube-shaped magnet (the scanner) so that the area to be studied is in the center of the scanner.
- If a contrast material is used, a doctor, nurse, or technologist will insert an IV into a vein in your hand or arm that will be used to inject the contrast material.
- Most MRI exams are painless. However, some patients find it uncomfortable to remain still. Others may feel closed-in while in the MRI scanner.
- The scanner can be noisy. During the MRCP, the MRI scanner makes loud knocking or thumping sounds. Earplugs or headphones are available for your comfort.

- You will be alone in the MRCP room. However, the technologist will be able to see, always hear and speak with you using a two-way intercom.
- You will need to hold your breath for most of the pictures.
- The length of your MRCP will depend on your medical condition, usually between 20-30 minutes.
- It is important that you can lie still during the scan. The movement will blur the pictures, producing a poor MRCP.

What can I expect after the MRCP?

- There are no after-effects from the scan. You can return to your normal activities as soon as the scan is over.

When will I get my results?

- Your provider will be contacted with the results of your test and will discuss the results with you.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your provider.