How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?
Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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Having an MRI scan

You have been referred for an MRI scan by the Audiology Department. This leaflet explains what it entails and why you need it.

Why do I need an MRI?

It is routine in the Audiology Department to offer an MRI scan to some patients if their symptoms and test results indicate it may be necessary. You may be offered a scan:
(a) When there is a significant difference in hearing between your right and left ear and/or you have noises in one or both of your ears (tinnitus)
(b) Your hearing has changed significantly over a certain time period.

What are you looking for?

We are looking for something called a Vestibular Schwannoma (VS), also known as an acoustic neuroma. This is a benign (non-cancerous) swelling along the hearing and balance nerve.
It is an extremely rare occurrence – only about 20 people out of every million in the population are diagnosed each year.
It results from a build up of “Schwann” cells (the cells that make up the lining of the hearing and balance nerve). The reason as to why this build up occurs is unclear at present.

What happens if you find a VS?

The vast majority of patients with VS will just need careful monitoring by an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor. This is due to the enhanced accuracy of MRI scanning techniques in early diagnosis.
Those diagnosed with VS will normally undergo regular MRI scans in order to monitor any changes. In rarer circumstances, depending on the size of the swelling and severity of symptoms, surgery or other treatments may be an option.

Having an MRI scan for VS

What happens during an MRI scan?

You will normally have your MRI scan within 6 weeks after you are referred for the test. The scanner itself is a large magnet that uses magnetic fields to take pictures of the area of interest. For a scan of the inner ear (and brain), the scanner usually encircles your head and upper body. You will need to be quite still during the course of the scan. In most cases it will last under 10 minutes and it will take place at Stoke Mandeville or Wycombe Hospitals. More information on the scan process will be sent to you by the Radiology department.

Is there an alternative to the MRI scan?

The MRI scan is the best way of finding what is happening with your hearing/balance nerve.

Before we send you for an MRI scan

In order to safely carry out the MRI we need to know if you have any of the following:
Cardiac pacemaker
Shunts
Implanted cardiac defibrillators
Cochlear implants
Neurostimulators
Metal fragments in the eye
History of heart or brain surgery
Cerebral aneurysm clips
Infusion pumps