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.

Author: Dr Margaret Adejolu
Breast Screening Unit
Issue date: June 2017
Review date: June 2019
Leaflet code: MRI breast
Version: 1.1

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**What is Breast MRI?**

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. The technique uses magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of the breasts. An MRI scanner is a large cylinder (tube) that contains powerful magnets. During the scan you lie face down on a couch that slides through the cylinder. This will take between 20 and 30 minutes.

**What are the possible side effects?**

A breast MRI scan is a safe, painless and relatively quick procedure, and it does not use radiation. The following are some potential issues that may arise:

- The dye injected into your arm during the procedure can cause some discomfort and a very small number of people may have an allergic reaction to the dye.
- Some women find it uncomfortable to lie on their front.
- The scanner makes a loud noise during the procedure. We can give you headphones or earplugs to wear. You are welcome to bring a CD with music.

**When is Breast MRI used?**

It is not a replacement for mammograms (breast X-rays) or ultrasound, but is used to provide additional information about your breasts in specific clinical scenarios, for example:

- To measure the size of a cancerous lump if this cannot be accurately done on ultrasound or mammograms.
- To check for other cancers in women who have multiple cancers on ultrasound and mammograms.
- **Invasive lobular cancer** - A small proportion of women with this subtype of breast cancer may have another small cancerous lump in the same breast or in the other breast. MRI breast is done in all ladies with this type of cancer before treatment is planned.
- **Neo-adjuvant Chemotherapy** - This is when chemotherapy is given to shrink a cancerous breast lump before surgery. Breast MRI helps to accurately determine the size of the cancerous mass and to measure the effect of chemotherapy on the lump by monitoring the size on subsequent scans.
- To provide additional screening for some women who have an increased risk of breast cancer.

**How will I get my results?**

How you receive the results of your MRI scan will depend on the reason for your scan. This will have been arranged with you prior to your scan and may be by letter, telephone or at an appointment in person.

*To avoid delays in your investigations and treatment we may call you for further investigations before you formally receive your MRI results.*

**Detecting abnormalities**

MRI is a very sensitive that consequently may pick up an abnormality in the breast. However, one of the drawbacks of Breast MRI is that it detects benign (non-cancerous lumps) as well. Sometimes normal tissue may also look a little abnormal on breast MRI. When an MRI scan shows a possible abnormality of which we were unaware, we may contact you to arrange an ultrasound examination to look more closely at the area. The majority of new areas identified by MRI are benign – although a small proportion are cancers. If the abnormality is not seen on ultrasound and there is concern that it may represent a small cancerous lump, an MRI guided biopsy of the area may be arranged. Only a few women will need to have this done.