



Location: The MRI Center at Lawrenceville
21 Lawrenceville-Pennington Road
Mercerville, NJ 08619
(609) 895-1500

The Imaging Center
8 Quakerbridge Plaza Drive
Mercerville, NJ 08619
(609) 890-0033

Bilateral Breast MRI

Bilateral Breast MRI – What is Bilateral Breast MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)?

Bilateral Breast MRI is a non-invasive method of medical imaging that uses a strong magnetic field to obtain breast images. It provides 3-D images of breasts, chest wall, and the lymph nodes located under each arm. Bilateral breast MRI means we obtain all these images of at the same time. These high-resolution bilateral breast MRI images allow specialists to make more accurate diagnoses and catch breast cancer at an earlier stage.

During the exam it is necessary to have an injection of gadolinium. The injection enhances your bilateral breast MRI images. The key to surviving breast cancer is early detection and treatment. Bilateral breast MRI is a useful tool for the detection and characterization of breast disease, assessment of local extent of disease and evaluation of treatment response.

Benefits of a Bilateral Breast MRI include Improved Patient Satisfaction

Generally recommended by doctors for high-risk patients, the bilateral breast MRI allows for all of the images to be obtained at the same time. The high-resolution images also allow for more accurate diagnosis and earlier cancer detection.

- Shorter scan times
- Single contrast material injection
- Faster interpretation of scan
- Increased patient satisfaction

The biggest advantage of the bilateral breast MRI is that only one office visit is needed. When a patient has a unilateral breast MRI they have to come on two separate days. Eliminating the need of two office visits means patients will be less prone to anxiety and will have less discomfort during their examination. We thrive on bringing our patients excellent new technologies that embrace innovation.

What are Some Reasons for Having a Bilateral Breast MRI?

- Bilateral breast MRI plays a vital role in diagnosing unsuspecting cancers in high-risk patients, staging the extent of disease, and planning treatments.
- The recent interest in MRI of the breast follows reports that many malignant lesions get brighter following the intravenous administration of a contrast agent. MRI has been shown to detect small breast cancer lesions that are sometimes missed by mammography, and MRI can successfully image the dense breast (usually found in younger women) for underlying and unsuspected breast cancers. Breast implants may be evaluated faster, more safely, and with less patient discomfort.
- Cancer involving the margins of breast masses may be better visualized with breast MRI. The extent of breast cancer may be underestimated with mammography. One in three women will have their surgical planning altered based upon the results of the breast MRI Scan. Proper surgical planning should result in a better outcome for the patient.
- The shape and vascular enhancement pattern of lesions can be analyzed. In very dense breasts, lesions may be more readily detected than by other imaging exams.
- Since breast MRI can detect lesions not seen on other imaging methods or by physical examination, the availability of MRI-guided breast biopsy and localization is a valuable adjunct to diagnostic breast MRI.

Preparing for Your Bilateral Breast MRI

1. Preparing for the exam is much like a standard MRI in that there are no food or drink restrictions before the exam. Continue to take medications as prescribed by your physician, and notify the technologist if you have a pacemaker, pace wire or cochlear implants. You will be asked a few questions before you undergo the exam and you will have to fill out the MRI Questionnaire which can be accessed on-line. You will be asked to change into a gown and you will have an I.V. inserted into a vein.



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2. A contrast material injection will be given to you before the procedure. The fluid highlights the circulation inside the breast creating the high-contrast image necessary for an optimal scan. Please let your doctor and technologist know if you have specific allergies.
3. During the procedure you will lay stomach-down on a table with your breasts in a recess containing the signal receiver (breast coils). The table then moves into the magnet where the images are taken. You will be asked to remain quiet, breathe normally, and lie still. During the scan you might hear a humming or buzzing noise, but you will not feel anything. Earplugs will be provided to reduce the level of noise. The technologist will monitor you during the entire exam through a window and will communicate with you through an intercom. You will be asked to remain still during the process. The bilateral breast MRI will eliminate the need to repeat this process twice and you will be done in about 30 minutes.

What to Expect After the Bilateral Breast MRI

Once the entire exam is over, the table will move out of the magnet and the technologist will remove the I.V. and help you off the table. You are then free to change into your clothes. Since the computer accumulates hundreds of pictures, it may take a while for your images to be printed and examined. If you received contrast, there may be some discomfort at the IV site. There are no after effects from having an MRI, and you may resume normal activity immediately. If you have taken a sedative, it is suggested that you have someone else drive you home. The contrast will naturally pass through your body within a day.

About Your Results

Ask if you should wait for your films or CD and ask when your doctor will receive your report. All reports are provided to the referring physician within 24 to 48 hours, but can be available immediately on our PACS System. Talk to your doctor, and if he is not currently subscribed to our PACS system, tell him to contact our PACS Administrator or Marketing Department.

An Urgent Health Issue

The American Cancer Society (ACS) reports that the most recent estimate for breast cancer in the United States is approximately 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer and 40,170 deaths from breast cancer for 2009.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States, other than skin cancer. It is the second leading cause of cancer death in women, after lung cancer.

The chance of a woman having invasive breast cancer some time during her life is about 1 in 8. The chance of dying from breast cancer is about 1 in 35. Breast cancer death rates are going down. This is probably the result of finding the cancer earlier and improved treatment. Right now there are about two and a half million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

For more information visit The American Cancer Society at www.acs.org.

Remember - Early Detection is Key. Talk with Your Physician!