

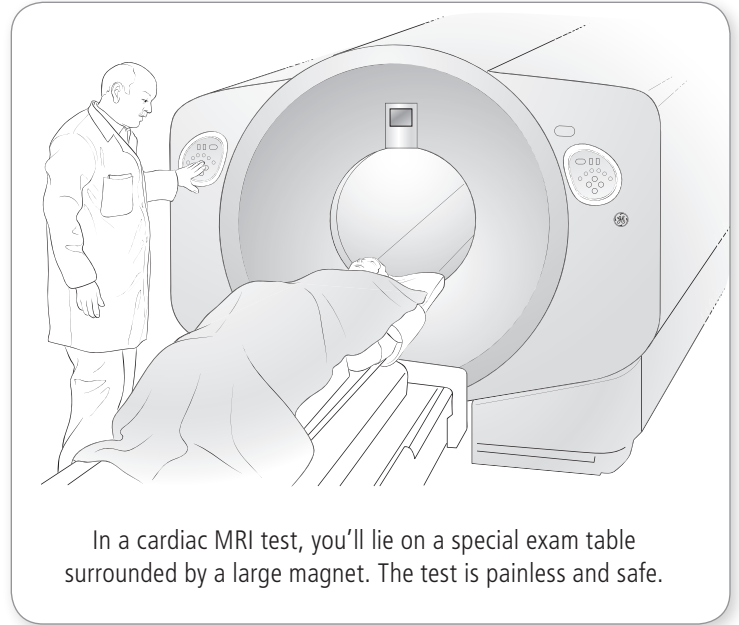
Cardiac MRI

What is a cardiac MRI test?

A **cardiac MRI** is a painless heart test that creates detailed images of your beating heart and your blood vessels. This test helps your doctor diagnose a range of heart problems.

MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) uses radio waves and strong magnets. Different types of tissue respond to the magnet in different ways, so they create images as radio waves bounce off the tissues. Many images are created during an MRI test, each focused on a different plane or “slice” of your heart. A computer combines them to create detailed pictures or movies of your heart.

Cardiac MRI tests are safe and effective. An MRI test does not use x-rays, so it doesn't expose you to any radiation. Yet an MRI test can provide more information than a traditional x-ray or CT scan.



Talking with your doctor about cardiac MRI

The table below lists the most common potential benefits, risks, and alternatives for cardiac MRI. There may be other benefits or risks in your unique medical situation. Talking with your doctor is the most important part of learning about these risks and benefits. If you have questions, be sure to ask.

Potential benefits	Risks and potential complications	Alternatives
<p>A cardiac MRI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides detailed images of your heart that can help your doctor diagnose heart problems Is painless Does not involve radiation (x-rays) 	<p>MRI tests are generally very safe. Potential complications include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injury caused if the magnet reacts with metal in or on the body. If you have metal objects or certain types of devices implanted in your body, you may not be able to have an MRI. Tell your doctor about any surgeries or procedures you've had. Allergic reactions to MRI enhancing agent, if it is used. This is rare. 	<p>Alternatives to cardiac MRI include other heart imaging tests, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest x-ray or CT scan Echocardiogram (heart ultrasound) Electrocardiogram (ECG OR EKG) Cardiac catheterization/angiogram

How do I prepare for the test?

- **Tell your doctor about anything implanted in your body, and about any surgeries or procedures you've had.** This will help your doctor decide whether an MRI is right for you. An MRI test uses a powerful magnet, so surgical implants can interfere with the test or cause serious injury. This list includes, but is not limited to:

- inner ear implants
- pacemakers or ICDs
- some types of brain aneurysm clips
- nerve stimulators

With rare exceptions, people with implanted devices such as these should not have an MRI.

Your doctor will tell you if an MRI test can be used in your case.

- **Tell your doctor if you feel anxious in enclosed places.** Depending on the type of MRI machine used for the test, your doctor may prescribe or give you a sedative beforehand to relax you.
- **Consider leaving jewelry, watches, hairpins, and similar items at home.** No metal items are allowed in the MRI room. For convenience, you may want to leave non-necessary metal items at home. (If you wear objects such as eyeglasses, they can be left in another room during the test.)
- **Continue taking your normal medications,** and you can eat and drink as normal before the test.

What happens before the test?

Here's what happens when you arrive for the test:

- **Checking in.** Tell the MRI technologist if you have any electronic devices or surgical implants in your body.
- **Getting ready.** You'll change into a gown and remove glasses, removable dental work, and any other metal items. Patches will be attached to your chest to monitor your heartbeat. If your test uses MRI enhancing agent (a liquid that helps structures stand out better on the MRI), an IV line will be placed in your wrist or arm.

What happens during the test?

Depending on what the doctor is looking for, a cardiac MRI test takes approximately 60 minutes. Here's what happens during the test:

- **Getting on the MRI exam table.** During the test, you'll lie on a moveable exam table. Pillows or straps may be used to help you remain in the correct position. The MRI technologist will help you get comfortable. If you want an extra pillow or a blanket under you, tell the technologist.
- **Talking with the technologist.** You'll probably be alone in the MRI room during the test, but the technologist will be able to see and hear you. If you have a question or you're uncomfortable, tell the technologist.
- **Lying still.** While the machine is recording images, you'll need to lie as still as possible. The technologist will tell you when you can move and when you need to lie still. You will be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds while a scan is being performed — this helps to produce a clearer image.
- **What you'll hear:** When the MRI machine is working, you will probably hear thumping, knocking, or humming that can sometimes be loud. This is normal, and you will be given earplugs to minimize the noise.
- **What you'll feel:** You may feel some warmth in the area being examined by the MRI, but this is normal.

What happens after the test?

If you had an IV, it will be removed. If you had a sedative during the test, someone else should drive you home. You'll get the results in a follow-up appointment with your doctor.