

MRI Arthrogram

What is an Arthrogram and how is it done?

An arthrogram is a diagnostic test which examines the inside of a joint (such as hips, shoulders, elbows, wrists,) to assess an injury or a symptom you may be experiencing. If your arthrogram is for pain relief then the pediatric radiologist will inject steroids and an anesthetic.

An MRI arthrogram at Texas Children's Hospital is done in a two-part procedure:

- First, the pediatric radiology doctor will use x-rays for image guidance to safely inject contrast medium (sometimes referred to as a contrast agent or “dye”) into the joint which outlines the soft tissue structures that might be injured (labrum, ligaments and cartilage) and makes them clearer to see on the images or pictures that will be taken later of the joint. This may also be done using ultrasound for guidance.
- After the injection, your child will need a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to provide more information about what is wrong with the joint.

Will my child be awake for the procedure?

- Most children remain awake, and we use a local numbing medicine at the site of the injection. In other cases, the child can be given minimal sedation to help them relax during the procedure or be put completely to sleep with general anesthesia. If your child requires anesthesia you will receive a phone call by a nurse the day before the procedure to give specific eating and drinking instructions.

What happens during an arthrogram?

- First, a nurse will greet and escort you and your child from the waiting room to the prep area for vital signs, health history and pregnancy test if your child is female and has started her your cycle. If a MRI is ordered, you will be asked to fill out a metal screening sheet. This will ensure that your child can be safely imaged in MRI.
- A physician or physician assistant will discuss the risks and benefits of the procedure with you and given you the opportunity to ask questions. Following this we ask that you sign a consent form confirming you understand the risks of the test and agree to have it done.
- The Texas Children's Child Life Department, if necessary, will be present to create a friendly environment.
- Your child will be asked to lie down so that a numbing skin cream can be applied to the skin over the joint being examined which will stay on for at least 20 minutes for optimal results.
- Your child will then be escorted into the Radiology suite. Parents and caregivers over the age of 18 can accompany during the exam.
- The patient will lie down on the x-ray table and will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. More numbing medicine will be injected. After this, the patient may feel pressure but not pain as we perform the arthrogram.
- A pediatric limited dose x-ray machine or ultrasound will be used to ensure the needle is in the right place before we put in the contrast dye mix.
- Afterward, if an MR arthrogram is to be performed, the patient will be escorted to MRI for more pictures. Your child can watch a video through special goggles during the MRI.
- The x-ray images will take about 10 minutes. The time the needle is in your body is about one minute.
- The MRI will take about one hour, depending on the number of joints that need to be imaged.



What are the risks associated with this procedure?

- An arthrogram is considered a low-risk. However, potential complications include:
 - Bleeding
 - Infection

Will my child feel anything during the arthrogram?

- The injection of the anesthetic may cause your child some discomfort, but it's minimized through the use of a numbing agent and Child life. Your child may have some mild pain, tenderness and swelling in the joint after the exam.

What happens after the MRI arthrogram?

- When the MRI arthrogram is done, your child will be ready to go home. The radiologist reviews the images and creates a report of the findings and diagnosis for your referring doctor

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