

## MRCP Basics

Utilizing special software, detailed image slices (cross sections) of the hepato-biliary & pancreatic system are obtained. This allows you to evaluate different types of body tissue in the area, as well as distinguish normal, healthy tissue from diseased tissue.

Patients are asked to fast 4 hours prior to the exam as it reduces the fluid in the gastric antrum and the duodenum, which may overlie the ducts. Prior to scheduling a patient for MRCP, he/she must be carefully screened for contraindications to being placed in the MR scanner. Such contraindications include cerebral aneurysm clips and cardiac pacemakers.

The MRCP exam takes 30-40 minutes but if a complete MRI of the liver and pancreas is necessary, the entire procedure takes about one hour and may include the administration of a contrast agent. If guest patients are claustrophobic (fearful of small, enclosed areas) or experience pain when lying on the back for more than 30 minutes, a relaxant or pain medication may be prescribed by you or administered by Imaging Center staff. The guest patient will lay on the table feet first with arms rested comfortably. Coils (special devices to improve image quality) will be placed on or around the abdomen area of the body. The scanning table slides into the magnet, covering the lower body. During the scan, guest patients do not feel anything, but they hear intermittent humming, thumping, clicking and knocking sounds; however, earplugs or music are provided to help mask the noise.

In some cases, the radiologist will request an injection of a contrast agent (dye) which will enhance arteries and enable the radiologist to interpret the areas in question. Before the exam, guest patients must inform the technologist, radiology nurse and/or physician if they have allergies, are pregnant or are nursing. The contrast agent is injected into a vein in the arm, which may cause a cool sensation. As images are taken, the guest patient must hold very still, and in some cases, hold their breath. The technologist is always able to see and hear the guest patient during the exam.

