

MRI Questions & Answers

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Why does CMH need an MRI?

CMH is an acute care hospital supporting a population of 140,000. MRI diagnostic testing is considered a required standard of care to provide support for the clinical programs at our hospital.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is one of the most advanced diagnostic imaging tools available. To date, Cambridge Memorial Hospital has not had an MRI machine, which has meant that patients needed to travel outside the community for testing. Last year, only 61% of Cambridge MRI patients received a scan within the Waterloo Wellington area, the remaining had to travel much further. Not only is this inconvenient, but they are also waiting a very long time for these out-of-town appointments. Most patients in our area currently wait an average of 66 days. This is simply too long if you are awaiting diagnosis for a painful or worsening condition. The Provincial target is for patients requiring an MRI to be scanned within 28 days.

How does a MRI machine work?

MRI is a non-invasive and radiation-free technology that uses a magnetic field and radio waves to produce detailed images of the organs, soft tissues, bone and virtually all other internal body structures. It is regularly relied upon by physicians to diagnose a wide variety of conditions including breast cancer, tumors, damage caused by a heart attack or disease and sports-related injuries to muscles and ligaments.

Similar to a CT scan, images from an MRI are reviewed in 'slices,' often as thin as a few millimeters. Slices can be done on any part of the body in any direction without moving the patient. Slices can also be compiled by the computer into a 3D image. Patients are not exposed to radiation during an MRI, as they are during a CT scan or X-ray.



What is MRI best used for?

The medical staff at CMH is particularly interested in having MRI technology available for its effective diagnostic capabilities in these areas: cardiac, breast cancer, bowel disorders and stroke. These are specialties that are not necessarily offered at other regional MRIs. Emergency patients and patients from our other clinical programs will also benefit from having MRI available to our physicians, as a form of diagnosis. MRI is often used for diagnosing brain or pituitary gland tumours, tendonitis, and early stage stroke. In addition, MRI can evaluate masses in soft tissues, bone tumours,

cysts and bulging or herniated discs in the spine. MRI can also see torn ligaments, and other injuries.

What does it cost?

The MRI machine, renovation and installation cost is estimated at \$4 million.

Where will it be located?

The MRI will be located adjacent to the current Diagnostic Imaging Department for easy access to the professional and support staff. It will also be located close to the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Units to support these clinical departments.

When will the new MRI be ready for patient exams?

The planning for construction will start immediately with the first patient being likely scanned by late 2011 or early in 2012. The actual timetable for acquisition and the renovations has not yet been determined.

Will this MRI bring new jobs to the hospital?

Yes, there will be additional positions for Medical Radiation Technologists with MRI expertise at CMH. There will also be an additional radiologist position required to provide this service to our community.

How do I book a MRI exam?

All MRI examinations must be ordered by a physician in Ontario. Your physician will order an MRI if your clinical condition indicates that this is the preferred test for your diagnosis and treatment.

How long will I have to wait for my appointment?

MRI exams are prioritized by a radiologist based upon the urgency of the request or clinical need of the patient. An urgent request may be done within a few days, while a less urgent request could wait for up to three months in this LHIN. Patients can check wait times for MRI at the Ministry Website www.health.gov.on.ca

For more information regarding the MRI, contact:

Cheryl MacInnes, MLT,ART,MBA,CHE
Director Quality & Clinical Support
Cambridge Memorial Hospital
519-621-2333 ext. 2235
cmacinnnes@cmh.org