



Indications for MRI with Contrast

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I am often asked by referring doctors when to order contrast enhancement for MRI. This is a great question. When appropriate, a MRI performed with and without contrast can significantly assist us in making the most accurate diagnosis. We will always indicate in the report, and often call, if gadolinium might lead to a more informed diagnosis. Unfortunately, if the MRI was ordered without contrast when contrast was needed, the patient will need to return thus delaying the diagnosis.

The following are my suggestions for using MRI contrast:

Brain

Contrast is very helpful for all brain MRI scans, except for evaluating simple headaches or sinuses. There have been numerous cases in which small lesions, especially meningiomas, venous angiomas, as well as small infarcts and other pathology were missed without contrast enhancement.

Joints (Shoulders, Elbows, Wrists, Hips, Knees, Ankles)

IV contrast is not very helpful unless there is concern of an infection, tumor or synovial pathology.

Arthrograms

Unlike IV contrast, intraarticular injection of contrast, MR Arthrogram (MRA), can be very helpful.

For example:

In the **shoulder**, for detecting full or partial thickness tears, labral injuries (also for the **hips**), articular cartilage damage, loose bodies and adhesive capsulitis;

In the **knee** for detecting recurrent meniscal tears, loose bodies and articular cartilage damage;

In the **wrist** for detecting subtle ligamentous or triangular fibrocartilage tears.

However, MRI Arthrography of the ankle and elbow are not very helpful except for visualizing cartilaginous injury or loose bodies.

Soft tissue masses

These are best differentiated by the use of contrast enhancement, especially if infection or tumor are suspected. Additionally, our 1.5 Tesla MRI can perform "fat saturation" images whereby the fat signal intensity is removed. By eliminating the fat signal allows significantly improved visualization of subtle areas of contrast enhancement to better evaluate pathology.

Spine

For the postoperative spine in which the surgery was performed within the past 3-5 years, contrast enhancement is especially helpful in evaluating the presence of disc pathology versus scar tissue. However, if the surgery was performed over 8-10 years ago, contrast is not often helpful. Additionally, contrast is very useful when evaluating for a metastatic disease, primary tumor or infection.

There is a newly described entity called Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis (NSF) that has been associated with MRI contrast media. This is a very rare and serious condition. It currently has only occurred in patients with severe renal disease. Because of this, screening of all patients for any type of renal failure prior to using gadolinium contrast material is essential. The FDA states, "There have been no reports of problems among patients with normal kidney function or among those with mild to moderate kidney insufficiency."

We have found gadolinium to be very safe with our patients. However, because of this FDA warning, we have redoubled our efforts in screening patients. Your understanding and assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

As always, both Dr. DuBose and I are available for you to call with any questions or assistance. Also, by discussing complicated cases with us, we can tailor the protocols and use of gadolinium to best answer your diagnostic questions and provide the safest experience for our patients.

For your information:

Here at High Field & Open MRI, we are currently updating our CPT list. For any CPT codes that you may need, visit:

www.myhealthscore.com

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What's New in Insurance: Updates in Pre-certifications

Insurance pre-certification is a utilization management tool for controlling excessive health care costs. It is the process of notifying the patient's insurance carrier prior to medical services being rendered. In the past, pre-certifications were only required for specific CPT codes. Today, however, pre-certifications are required for most CPT codes.

Pre-certification currently may take up to 48 hours to obtain. In most cases, the referring physician ordering the study must initiate and complete the pre-certification process. In an emergency situation, however, the insurance carriers will review each situation on a case-by-case basis, allowing for a quicker response time.

If you have any questions or need assistance with any pre-certification issues, please feel free to call us at **(502) 429-6500**.

The following information items are required before contacting the insurance carrier:

- ◆ Copy of insurance card (front and back)
- ◆ Patient ID and policy number
- ◆ Patient name and date of birth
- ◆ Physician's name (person who signed the prescription order)
- ◆ Place of service and Tax ID
- ◆ Date of service
- ◆ Type of service and CPT code
- ◆ Diagnosis and ICD-9
- ◆ Description of symptoms and medical history.

*No pre-certification is required for Medicare or Medicaid.

*If MVA or PIP benefits are depleted or exhausted, pre-certification of commercial or private insurance may be required prior to the scan.

Insurance company websites:

- Aetna: *
www.MedSolutionsOnline.com
- Anthem:
www.Anthem.com
- Bluegrass Family Health:
www.BluegrassFamilyHealth.com
- CHA Health:
www.CHA-Health.com
- Cigna: **
www.Cigna.com
- Humana:
www.Humana.com
- Passport:
www.PassportHealthPlan.com
- United Healthcare:
www.UnitedHealthcareOnline.com
- * Aetna claims and pre-certifications are processed by MedSolutions.
- ** Cigna claims and pre-certifications are processed by One Call Medical.

Kirk & Brooke's Corner

We are frequently asked which insurance carriers we accept. The next time you speculate over whether or not your insurance carrier may be accepted by us, please remember these guidelines:

- ◆ High Field & Open MRI is contracted as an in-network provider for virtually every major and minor insurance carrier.

- ◆ We accept all usual government based plans, including Medicare, Medicaid, and Passport.
- ◆ If you are self-insured or you have an employee-based plan that is not common, please call us and inquire.

For more information regarding which insurance carriers we accept, or any other services we may offer at

High Field & Open MRI, please feel free to contact us anytime:

[Brooke Chism at \(502\) 938-5556](tel:5029385556) or
[Kirk Macaulay at \(502\) 599-9516](tel:5025999516).



Helpful insights and recommendations for improving patient service and creating a great company image

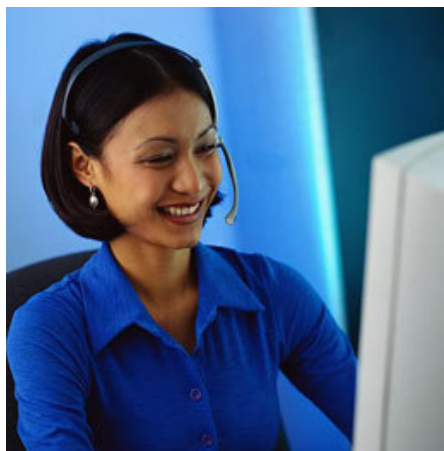
By Emily A. Weber, High Field and Open MRI

An integral ingredient in the business world is customer service. However, during the daily activities of any business, it becomes easy to lose sight of how our patients view us. While one positive comment can boost the image of your business, one negative comment can ruin your reputation in the eyes of your patient and everyone he or she knows.

The best patient service starts with the training of your employees. No matter what the job description states, each and every employee is a “customer service representative.” It is important to always remember that customer service is everyone’s job.

One way of keeping your patients satisfied and your employees on the right track is to “sell your company to your employees.” Make sure that everyone in your office is thoroughly aware of the products and services rendered. If your office has a mission statement or company philosophy, be sure that everyone is well aware of it. Have this statement in writing and posted throughout your office environment. Be creative

in communicating what is expected of your employees.



An effective way of empowering an employee is to recognize effort. It is important to regularly commend those employees who have gone the extra mile and put in extra effort in serving your patients. Not only does this show all employees that their efforts are noticed, but it also serves as an excellent example for others to follow. This keeps the entire organization on track and “living the mission statement.”

First impressions are key to patient satisfaction as well. To ensure that your patients experience an excellent first impression, speak with those employ-

ees who are the first to greet them or have the most contact. Determine what concerns your patients have about a product or service, what complaints are heard most often, and what they find most beneficial about your business. By doing so, you can tailor your services to better suit their needs.

By remembering that every employee is a customer service representative, their training will ensure your patients a more pleasant experience, leading to a far better perception of your company throughout the community.

***“Pleasure in the
job puts
perfection in the work”
—Aristotle***



