



Standing MRI - Frequently Asked Questions

What are the advantages of a Standing MRI?

In contrast to the high field system, a low field MRI examination can be performed on a standing, but sedated, patient. This avoids general anesthesia and the risks involved with laying a horse down for the procedure.

However, given the lower field of this MRI system, the quality of these images is not as good as with a high field system and some small/subtle lesions may not be able to be identified. Additionally, the patients have to be still for the exam and some horses, even while sedated, will move, flinch or sway which can produce artifacts on the images and make it difficult or even impossible to interpret.

Does my horse need to be anesthetized for the Standing MRI?

No. The horses will be given a sedative to keep them relaxed and still during the procedure but they will remain standing. Your horse's sedation will be under the direction of an Animal Imaging veterinarian.

What is involved in preparing the horse for the MRI?

All horses will get a physical examination performed by an Animal Imaging veterinarian. An intravenous catheter will be placed in the jugular vein (neck) to administer the sedatives and fluids during the procedure. Both front (or hind) feet will have the shoes removed prior to the examination.

What areas can be imaged?

Prior to the MRI study, it is important to ensure that the region of interest has been localized by the referring veterinarian. Areas that can easily be imaged with the low field MRI include: the foot, pastern, and fetlock. Areas higher than the fetlock are more difficult to image and often have artifacts due to the location and motion artifact. If you are interested in a carpus, tarsus or proximal suspensory ligament study, the referring veterinarian can call our office and we can offer advice regarding patient selection.

Can you take images of multiple areas of my horse?

A typical MRI study for a given area of anatomy (i.e., the foot from the toe to mid-pastern) often takes 1–4 hours depending on the site and cooperation of the patient. Therefore, we typically only perform 2 (maybe 3) sites on any given patient in one day.



What types of problems can you see with the standing MRI?

Regarding musculoskeletal problems, we can identify tendon and ligament injuries/tears (i.e. deep digital flexor tendon), inflammation or bruising of the bones, arthritis or degenerative disease of the joints, fractures, inflammation of the joints or synovial structures, and inflammation or damage to the areas around the joints/bones/tendons/ligaments, to name a few.

Why does an MRI exam take so long?

Typical MRI studies are made up of multiple “sequences” and hundreds to thousands of images, which include all parts of the anatomy in the area of interest. The different “sequences” provide different information about the structure and pathology of the areas imaged. The radiologists at Animal Imaging will be reviewing all the images as they are acquired and can design the MRI protocol during the examination according to the history and problems identified in each horse.

When will I get a report?

The radiologists will review each individual image and write a thorough and comprehensive report, with images of abnormalities, within 24-48 hours. Every effort is made to understand and rank the clinical significance of the imaging findings based on the history and clinical exam. The referring veterinarian will then use the information from the report to design a treatment/management plan.

How do I schedule an appointment?

A completed MRI referral form is required from the referring veterinarian, including any pertinent history related to the exam, before scheduling the MRI. This form is available on our website at www.animalimaging.net. Once a form is received, our front desk staff will call to schedule the appointment. Equine MRI exams are scheduled Monday thru Friday.

How do I prepare my horse for the exam?

Your horse can eat and drink as normal the morning of the examination, including having hay in the trailer during transport to the site.

What should I do with my horse after the examination?

Your horse can resume normal feed, water, and medications (if needed) when you get home, unless otherwise directed by the Animal Imaging veterinarians. The referring veterinarian will contact you after receiving the report and/or discussing the case with the Animal Imaging team. The referring veterinarian will be your source of contact should you have any questions about treatment or management of your horse.

**Please call (972) 869-2180 should you have any further questions.
We are always happy to help.**