

Enhanced FAQ

Will insurance pay for an MRI at FirstScan?

FirstScan opened its doors in November of 2015 with the intention of bringing a deeply discounted cash pay price to men who wanted to take advantage of the study prior to us being able to bill insurance carriers. In the meantime, we have been negotiating contracts with the different insurance providers. We cannot accept those carriers coverage until those contracts are completed. That process typically lasts 8-12 months. We have found that our charge of \$595 is significantly less than that of the average copay when billing insurance, often times it is 3-4 times less than that of a hospital copay when billing insurance. Comparing the out of pocket expense to the patient, FirstScan will be significantly lower every time. For more information please review the “MRI Average Patient Cost When Billed to Insurance” document under our “Resources” tab on the FirstScan website.

Should I have this done at a hospital in the meantime as my insurance will cover it?

Every patient’s coverage is different, so we cannot speak specifically to this point. However, what we can say is that just because your insurance ‘covers’ a hospital MRI it is important to remember a few key things:

- Hospital charges are typically 3-4 times higher than that of an independent facility like FirstScan. In fact, most range from \$2,000 - \$3,000.
- That cost likely does not include the radiologist interpretation, and you will likely be billed separately for that, and that can range anywhere from \$200-\$500.
- If you have not met your deductible, you may be responsible for part or all of the total cost, which compared to our \$595 is significantly more.
- If you have met your deductible, but not your maximum out of pocket, you will still owe for the exam. Most plans will pay at 80% (with the patient being responsible for the remaining 20% of the hospital charge, which again is 3-4 times higher than that of FirstScan).

Is your study the same as one that the hospitals are offering?

The short answer is no. In fact, it is very much different. FirstScan offers a 100% non-invasive MRI that takes approximately 20-30 minutes. There are some brief patient preparation guidelines that we do ask of our patients (namely to refrain from eating 4-6 hours before the exam and to take a Gas-X before arriving). The following are details of a typical hospital prostate MRI exam:

- The hospital will image you with what is called an endorectal coil. This is essentially a rectal probe. Some will provide muscle relaxers for their 45-60 minute exam, but you will have to remain in the MRI scanner, with this coil inserted in your rectum for 45-60 minutes.

- Hospitals typically ask that patients undergoing this exam to use 2-3 enemas at different intervals before arriving. This is solely at the patient's expense.
- Generally speaking, MRI's differ in three areas: the radiologist, the technologist, and the technology.
 - FirstScan's radiologist, is the only prostate 'expert' in the area. He has read hundreds of prostate MRI studies, has had a fellowship with Dr. John Feller, MD, a world thought leader in prostate radiology, and consults with this world expert when the need arises. Since most area hospitals do not perform many prostate MRIs, their radiologists, while all very competent, do not possess the requisite experience to accurately interpret the MRI; hence, at FirstScan, you can rest assured that your MRI interpretation is extremely accurate. When we say you don't have cancer, it is 97% certain that you don't!
 - Much like FirstScan's radiologist, FirstScan's technologist, or MRI operator, has scanned hundreds of prostates. As mentioned above, since hospitals do not see many of these exams, their technologists (as with their radiologists) may lack the experience to provide a quality exam for the radiologist to interpret. Again, this is not due to a lack of skill or competency, but rather due to a lack of exposure and volume. Hospitals simply do not focus on this procedure whereas this is FirstScan's sole activity.
 - FirstScan utilizes a FDA approved, proprietary (patented) coil or antennae that is 100% non-invasive and is at the forefront of MRI coil technology. We liken it to a pair of swim trunks or boxer shorts. The hospitals do not employ this technology. We have created a detailed comparison between a prostate MRI at FirstScan versus one in a typical hospital setting called 'MRI Cost Breakdown for Physicians and Patients', which is available via the 'Resource' tab at www.firstscanomaha.com.

I have a rising PSA, why hasn't my physician recommended FirstScan?

Using MRI as a means to 'screen' for prostate cancer is a relatively new concept, and some physicians may simply not be aware of the advancements that have occurred in MRI technology and, thus, not aware of this option. We have had discussions with most of the physician groups in the Omaha, NE and Lincoln, NE area, however, we have not yet reached everyone. We encourage you to print off material that you find on our website and bring that in to discuss with your physician. They are more than welcome to call us as well for more details. We are also more than happy to go visit with them if you, or they, would prefer.

Since this is a 'screening' procedure, can you give me my results?

FirstScan requires written orders from your physician before performing the study as your healthcare is a serious matter and we want to ensure that your healthcare team is actively involved in your care. For that same reason, we will only report the findings of your study to the referring physician. Your physician would then, in turn, discuss the findings with you. This ensures that your questions and concerns are appropriately addressed. We typically provide

results to your physician within 48 hours of performing your study. You are free to contact them after that to obtain your results.

Does your MRI Prostate Screen require a contrast injection?

No. Our study is 100% non-invasive, which includes not needing a dynamic contrast injection, or DCE, and no needles. The hospital study will require the contrast agent however. We have chosen not to include this in our study protocol because of recent studies outlining the decreased efficacy of DCE in highlighting lesions on the prostate gland¹. Furthermore, due to the unique nature of our non-invasive coil, the images created are of such greater clarity that it renders DCE unnecessary for all but a few unique situations.

When is the best time to have an MRI of my prostate done?

The US National Library of Medicine² suggests that MRI of the prostate be used adjunct to PSA (and/or DRE) screening, and when the PSA increases (also called PSA velocity), and continues to do so, that would be the ideal time to have the scan done PRIOR to a TRUS biopsy. Patients who have had a negative TRUS biopsy are also good candidates for the exam, as we can tell, with a high degree of certainty, whether or not another TRUS biopsy is needed. It is also recommended that patients with a family history of prostate cancer start being screened at age 45, including PSA and MRI.

I am unsure if I am claustrophobic, and I am nervous about having the exam performed. Will I go into the scanner head first?

No, patients will go into the scanner feet first, lying on their back. Depending on one's height, the top of one's head may stick out of the scanner itself. Our technologist is very adept at keeping patients calm and comfortable during the study.

¹ <http://archive.rsna.org/2015/15014255.html>

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4557320/>