

# Health matters



## Cheltenham Imaging Centre

The Clinical Team from Cheltenham Imaging Centre discuss the use of MRI in helping to diagnose the many conditions that may occur with the Lumbar Spine (lower back).

THE Health and Safety Executive has publicised that 80% of people will experience back pain at some point in their lives and one in every six lost working days in the UK will be due to it. As the lower back is responsible for supporting most of the body's weight, it can be particularly vulnerable to injury and degeneration from wear and tear.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a safe diagnostic imaging technique, which is used routinely to diagnose problems within the spine as it is able to demonstrate the vertebral bodies, intervertebral discs, spinal cord and nerves, facet joints, ligaments and the supporting muscles in high detail – allowing us to even look at individual nerves. We are therefore able to see if they are being trapped, which may cause sciatica (pain in the buttock or down the leg) or pins and needles or paraesthesia (numbness).

Prolapsed (slipped) discs, stenosis (narrowing) and disc degeneration (wear and tear) are easily demonstrated on MRI utilising fast, thin sliced high resolution protocols to obtain crystal clear pictures. Our advanced imaging centre offers access to one of the UK's first, full-time clinical, 3.0 Tesla MRI scanners, essential for people in acute or intense pain where ultra-fast, high resolution scanning may be the only way to obtain a diagnosis.

We also run the UK's first High Field Open MRI system for scanning patients where the use of a conventional closed MRI scanner may not be possible due to the restrictions of size or claustrophobia. This is an important factor as the incidence of obesity has risen within the general population exacerbating spinal problems.

If you experience any ongoing back problems, consider seeing your GP or a spinal specialist. Referral to the 3.0T, Open or 1.5T MRI scanners can be made via your GP, physiotherapist, chiropractor, osteopath or other clinical practitioner. The Cheltenham Imaging Centre offers MRI scans with no waiting time for appointments. A one part scan, including the specialist consultant's report, costs £218 and your pictures are available to take with you on the day.

For more information call 01242 535 908, visit [www.cheltenhamimaging.co.uk](http://www.cheltenhamimaging.co.uk) or pop into Linton House Clinic, Thirlestaine Road.

**CHELtenham IMAGING CENTRE**