



Mid-Michigan MRI unveils new ‘open’ MRI for claustrophobic, overweight patients

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March 26, 2007, EAST LANSING, Mich. — For claustrophobic, overweight and obese patients, having a magnetic resonance imaging procedure can be a distressing, if not impossible, experience using standard MRI equipment.

However, Mid-Michigan MRI is now offering new technology known as “open” MRI at the Michigan State University Radiology Center, allowing these patients access to this valuable procedure.

“Open MRI procedures are especially useful for claustrophobic individuals and overweight or obese patients, because patients have greater room and can see beyond the open MRI machine,” said Mark DeLano, director of MRI at the Radiology Center and co-medical director of Mid-Michigan MRI, a joint venture of MSU and Sparrow Hospital in Lansing.

In a standard MRI procedure, a patient lies within a somewhat enclosed “ring,” something that can be challenging for the claustrophobic or overweight person. As the name implies, the open MRI technology is open on either side of the patient, allowing for more space and visibility.

The open MRI provides diagnostic services similar to normal MRI services. Mid-Michigan MRI and the MSU Clinical Center use a GE 0.7T OpenSpeed MRI which uses two magnets above and below the patient to create the diagnostic images.

While procedures done on the open MRI take slightly longer to complete than standard MRI, the major advantage is that, thanks to its openness, it offers this technology to people who would not have been able to use it.

Approximately 10 percent of patients are claustrophobic and half of them cannot complete a normal MRI. The open MRI is an alternative option for performing diagnostic MRIs which can be cost saving.

Patients must have a physician referral to use open MRI services. Open MRI technology is covered as standard MRI treatment under most types of health insurance.

Previously, mid-Michigan residents traveled to Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, Flint, Detroit, and Toledo to use open MRI technology. Services are now available at the Clinical Center five days a week and during select evenings. Currently, the Clinical Center has open appointments.

Other services provided by Mid-Michigan MRI include CT services at the Clinical Center, and MRI services at Sparrow Hospital, Clinton Memorial Hospital in St. Johns, and Ionia County Memorial Hospital in Ionia.

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