

CUBIC Covid-19 related Working Protocols

[Approved by the CUBIC Management Committee 15 August 2022]

The following operating procedures have been developed to reduce the covid-related risks for MRI operators, researchers and participants using the CUBIC MRI facility. All MRI operators and researchers must follow the CUBIC Rules of Operation to ensure safety of themselves and participants. In addition, they must follow the extra procedures related to Covid-19 for CUBIC MRI and be familiar with the RHUL Psychology department procedures for research laboratories. Physical copies of the extra procedures are available at the MRI Unit.

Risk factors

- i) Infection can spread through droplets released from the nose and/or mouth of infected people who may/may not show symptoms of the disease.
- ii) The droplets may land on clothing or hard surfaces and on other people who are in close proximity.
- iii) By touching the contaminated surface and then touching their face region or by breathing the droplet, the virus can pass on to a person.

All staff and participants must wash their hands on entering and leaving the building. If unable to do so, hand sanitiser stationed by the entrances and exits should be used. All surfaces should be cleaned before and after use, as should all equipment including computer equipment. Avoid touching your face where possible and sneeze/cough into a tissue, or into your arm. All tissues should be disposed of straight away. All waste should be disposed of in the usual manner. All touch points to be regularly cleaned by staff.

Pre-assessment of potential infection

The MRI operator and the researcher involved for a particular scan must notify the MRI Operations officer and the MRI Director if they are exhibiting symptoms of covid-19.

The potentially infected person should not attend CUBIC and should follow the latest government guidelines. If an alternate operator can be organised then the scan may go ahead, otherwise it should be cancelled (no charge will be made for unforeseen cancellations due to Covid). They should only return to work when symptoms end, or after a negative covid test.

The Covid screening questions (Appendix A) must be completed and should be signed by the participant when they are at the MRI Unit. If participants report any symptoms, or if they are aware that they have had contact with someone who has tested positive, then they should not take part in the scan session. If an alternate participant can be organised, then the scan may go ahead, otherwise the scan session should be cancelled.

Participants should be encouraged to wear face covering if possible, which will be provided.

Safe working practices

As with the usual practice, all scans must be booked in advance on the CUBIC Calendar.

On arrival and when leaving the MRI unit, everyone is encouraged to wash their hands using the facilities in the reception area, or to use the hand sanitisers provided.

All personnel will be provided with a surgical face mask and encouraged to wear it during the time in the unit and disposed of before leaving. The participants should be encouraged to wear a mask (to be provided) during the scan. If any experimental procedures are affected by masks, or the participant is in discomfort when wearing one, or they require corrective lenses, then they may be scanned without a mask (additional cleaning of the scanner will then be required taking additional time between scans).

Following the Covid screening and only if there are no concerns, the scanning session can proceed. If the criteria are not met, the participant will not be permitted to enter the MRI unit. If a person attending the unit has symptoms, then they will have to leave the facility immediately.

The participant should keep all of their belongings in the locker and to be metal free. They will then be asked to complete the MRI screening forms in the MRI lobby.

A maximum of three persons is to be present in the MRI control room at a time and social distancing must be maintained at all times. Operators, researchers and participants are strongly encouraged to wear masks during this time.

The participant should be escorted to the scanner room by the operator, ensuring they do not touch door handles. The earplugs can be placed on the scanner bed for them to use. When they leave the scanner, the doors should be opened by the operator to ensure there is no contact.

The operator/researcher and the participant should maintain some distance at all times except for when positioning the participant in the scanner, or when attaching peripheral equipment such as scalp electrodes in which case face masks should be worn.

At the end of the scan session, the participant must be escorted to the reception area immediately and advised not to touch anything on the way. Doors should be opened by the operator.

Hygiene and cleaning

All persons are encouraged to wash their hands or use the hand sanitizers when entering and leaving the MRI unit.

Outer door handles, locker handles, desk, pen etc. should be wiped clean using disinfectant after each participant by the operator or the researcher.

Other items that should be cleaned using the appropriate cleaning products¹ after each participant includes, the scanner bore, head-coils, emergency alarm ball, button boxes, headphones, vision correction glasses if used and other peripheral equipment as well as the bed and work surfaces.

The operators and researchers are strongly recommended to wash their hands or use the sanitizer once the participant is in the scanner and before starting the scan procedure as well as after taking them out of the scanner at the end of the scan.

PPE

The operators and researchers are strongly recommended to wear a facemask. They could wear gloves if they wish to when a participant is present in the room. These should be changed after each participant and the used items are discarded in a bin, which must be emptied every day.

¹ Standard cleaning products could be used. Siemens suggest not to use any concentrated liquids including alcohol, or undiluted benzene, acetone or phenol.

CUBIC MRI - COVID-19 Questionnaire:

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Scan Date: _____

Please read the questions carefully and answer to the best of your knowledge. If anything is unclear, please ask the research staff member.

Do you have:	
a high temperature or shivering	Yes / No
a new, continuous cough	Yes / No
a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste	Yes / No
shortness of breath	Yes / No
feeling tired or exhausted	Yes / No
an aching body	Yes / No
a headache	Yes / No
a sore throat	Yes / No
a blocked or runny nose	Yes / No
loss of appetite	Yes / No
diarrhoea	Yes / No
feeling sick or being sick	Yes / No

If you have any of these symptoms, as per NHS advice, you should try to stay at home and avoid contact with others.

Seek further advice from NHS website if necessary or contact your GP.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
 (for children under 18 years: signature by child and a parent or guardian)

FOR STAFF USE:

Signature: _____ Name: _____