

“Knee scans show problems that are common in people without pain. Before having a scan, ask your doctor what the alternatives are for you.”

Professor Rachelle Buchbinder,
Rheumatologist

Still unsure?

When you talk to a doctor, ask:

1. Do I really need a scan?
2. What are the risks?
3. What happens if I don't have a scan?



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Scan your options

— not
your
knee

**KNEE SCANS CAN
CAUSE HARM**

What are my options?

Not everyone needs a scan

This is important to know, because having a scan that you did not need can cause harm (see next page). This leaflet contains information about when you might need a knee scan, and when you should try other options first.

Things to look out for

You may need a scan if you have

- a recent major injury,
OR unable to take 4 steps on knee,
OR difficult bending knee past a right angle (90 degrees)
- cancer or suspected cancer
- had a recent infection, use recreational drugs, or take medicines that reduce your immune system

Common knee pain

The following symptoms, on their own, do not generally require a knee scan

- sudden pain after minor injury
- pain and/or stiffness

Why you should scan your options, not your knee

On average, for every 100 people who have a knee MRI scan:

86

Will get false alarms*

This means that **almost everyone** over the age of 50 who has a knee MRI scan will get a false alarm. The most common cause of knee pain in this age group is osteoarthritis, which can be diagnosed without the need for a scan.

* A false alarm is a scan result that seems serious (e.g. 'meniscus tear') but is common in healthy people. False alarms can increase your chances of having a surgery called 'arthroscopy.' These surgeries are not effective, carry risks such as infection and death, and can *worsen* knee osteoarthritis.

Get back to better

Knee pain improves on its own

Expert doctors recommend trying some of the options below to manage your pain in the short term. If you don't have any of the 'things to look out for' (page 1), you don't have to make a decision about having a scan right now.



Stay active and build up knee strength



Exercise regularly



Lose weight if you are overweight or maintain healthy weight if you are not



Use pharmacy medication (if needed)



Give yourself time. Many recover in 4-6 weeks