

MRI – Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Imaging – Produces a 3-d image inside the body.

MRI is similar in approach, but complementary to, a CAT scan, which uses X-rays for imaging.

MRI is therefore safer than a CAT scan (no X-rays or other damaging radiation is used). Radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation does not cause DNA damage or any other kind of damage.

MRI primarily visualizes soft-tissue and especially cancer tumors while a CAT scan primarily visualizes bones or Calcium based dyes drunk to visualize the digestive tract.

MRI uses the same principles and NMR.

- 1) The patient is placed in a very strong magnetic field. Creating this very strong magnetic field is technically very demanding, explaining MRI machines are so expensive (~ 0.5 – 1.5 \$ million)
- 2) The patient is irradiated with radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation.
- 3) The flipping (resonance) of ^1H nuclear spins is monitored – Actually emitted photons are measured using the FT method.
- 4) Magnetic field gradients are used to gain imaging information. The magnetic field gradients are rotated around a central point and measurements are taken at each angle around 360° to gain 2-dimensional information. This technique is called **tomography**.

The overall **MRI** imaging approach involves looking at each 2-dimensional slice.

Each slice is added to give a 3-dimensional stack (analogous to stacking DVD's or CD's).

Each slice is shaded to indicate differences in the amount of ^1H atoms in different areas/tissues.

Water and fat have the highest density of ^1H atoms, so these are primarily being monitored in an **MRI** image.

The popular medical diagnostic technique of **magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** is based on **the same principles as NMR**, namely the **flipping (i.e. resonance) of nuclear spins of H atoms by radio frequency irradiation** when a patient is placed in **a strong magnetic field**. **Magnetic field gradients are used to gain imaging information, and rotation of the gradient around the center of the object gives imaging in an entire plane (i.e. slice inside patient)**. In an MRI image, you are looking at **individual slices that when stacked make up the three-dimensional image of relative amounts of H atoms**, especially the H atoms from **water and fat, in the different tissues** [Memorize the preceding passage, as it will be worth 14 points on the final. No I am not kidding, 14 points right there.]