

Contrast Media and Your Kidneys

Patient Information

Diagnostic Imaging
Southern Health

Iodine – containing contrast media, sometimes just referred to as "contrast," are chemicals in a liquid form which are used to highlight organs, blood vessels, or tissues. They make normal and abnormal structures more visible and therefore improve the radiologist's ability to make a detailed and correct diagnosis of disease processes or injury. Using contrast can also provide extra reassurance that nothing at all is wrong with the part of the body we are examining.

Contrast media are processed by the kidneys and leave the body in your urine. For people with completely normal kidney function, the contrast is easily handled. However, certain medical conditions can predispose the kidneys to damage if you have contrast media given for a radiology procedure. The risk of this occurring is increased particularly if you know you have kidney disease. **There are other conditions that also put you at increased risk of kidney injury or even kidney failure** if you have contrast media, especially if you are given a large volume of contrast or you need to have multiple tests which all use contrast media.

Prevention is the key avoiding kidney injury or failure.

We do this by

- Deciding if you are at higher than normal risk
- If you are at increased risk, testing your blood to assess kidney function
- Minimizing contrast dosage where possible
- Intravenous fluids through a drip if we think you are at particularly high risk of kidney damage

Please put an "X" in the box in front of ANY of the following medical conditions you think you may have NOW or have had IN THE PAST:

- Proteinuria (protein in your urine)

- Previous kidney surgery

- Gout

- Diabetes

- Heart failure

- Metformin (Diabex) being taken for diabetes

Based on your responses to these questions, we may suggest that you have a simple blood test to determine if your kidney function is normal before we give you contrast media.

For **outpatients**, this can be arranged through your local doctor up to 3 months prior to your appointment, and if you have had kidney function testing for some other reason during this time, there is no need to repeat the test. We simply need you to bring the result from your doctor. Alternatively, you can have the kidney function blood test performed in the Hospital on the same day that you come in for your radiology procedure, but **you will need to allow at least 3 hours for the result to become available. Renal function results are MANDATORY for all inpatients prior to contrast injection.**

If you have any questions about the information above, you should discuss it with your doctor or ask to speak with the radiologist in the Diagnostic Imaging Department. We are happy to discuss any aspect of this information sheet with you.