

MRI Contrast Injection

Patient Information

You are about to have a MRI scan. This involves placing you on a table which slides into a tunnel which uses a strong magnetic field to produce images of your body. Some medical conditions are most easily and accurately diagnosed if we give you an injection of “contrast material” into a vein in your arm during the MRI study.

Because of what your doctor has written on the MRI request slip, we often know that you will or will not need a contrast material injection before you have the scan, and we will tell you this before you enter the scanner. However, for some types of medical conditions, the need for contrast material is decided only after we obtain some pictures, so you may not be told that you need the injection until you are on the scanning table and after the scanning is partly completed.

Please read the following information carefully. You will be asked your permission (“Your Consent”) to perform an injection of contrast. It is okay to say “no” if you are still unsure after talking to one of our medical imaging technologists or doctors about your concerns.

- The contrast material we use in MRI is a gadolinium – based material, which highlights abnormalities in many different tissues and organs, making them easier for us to diagnose even when they are small. **Some kind of adverse reaction to MRI contrast material occurs in less than 1 in every 100 people** who have the injection, and in the vast majority of cases these reactions are minor, temporary, and need no treatment.

If you have asthma or allergies of any kind (to foods, drugs, previous MRI , CT, or X – ray contrast material injections) you have a slightly higher chance of having an adverse reaction , so **please tell us** if this is the case.

The MRI contrast material we use today has been given to millions of people worldwide for over 10 years and there has been only one reported death relating to MRI contrast material injection, so it is extremely safe.

All reactions to contrast usually occur immediately or within an hour of contrast injection. These reactions can be mild , moderate, or severe. Moderate and severe reactions require immediate medical treatment, including drugs to counteract the allergic reaction, while you are in the scanning room. You may need a period of observation afterwards before we decide it is safe for you to go home.

Mild non – allergic reactions – occur in about 1 in every 1000 patients

- Nausea/vomiting
- Headache
- Temporary “funny taste” in the mouth

Mild allergic reactions - occur in about 1 in every 10, 000 patients

- A generalized itchy rash or reddening of the skin
- Local pain and tenderness at the injection site due to irritation of the vein

Moderate allergic reactions – occurring in about 1 in every 40,000 patients

- A mild asthma type attack consisting of chest tightness and some difficulty breathing

Severe allergic reactions – occurring in about 1 in every 100,000 patients

- Severe difficulty breathing
- Severe swelling of the face, mouth, or airways

If you are pregnant There are no known adverse effects from MRI scanning during pregnancy, but we prefer to delay MRI scans until after the 24th week unless it is a medical emergency. Although there is no evidence that MRI contrast material will harm your unborn baby, we prefer not to give it because it enters the baby’s circulation. Nevertheless, in some situations, we will decide that it is important that we give it because the benefits (more important diagnostic information) outweigh the potential risks. However, we would discuss this with you before going ahead in order to ensure that you are comfortable with this decision.

What you should expect if you have a contrast material injection?

After the needle prick there may be a sensation of warmth/cold at the injection site. After this sensation, there are usually no other symptoms.

If you have any concerns about any of the above information, please ask us before, during, or after the scan. We are happy to discuss these issues with you.

“Respect, communication, involvement”

The staff in Diagnostic Imaging want to make sure that you have understood the information that we have provided personally, as well as the information contained in the information sheet. We believe your understanding about why and how we are planning to assist you is very important.