



Your doctor has requested us to perform a CT scan. As part of this procedure we may need to inject iodinated contrast (x-ray dye) into a vein in your arm as part of this procedure.

Please ensure you read the following information, being sure to ask the technician about anything you do not understand, and then complete and sign the consent form provided so we can administer the contrast media (x-ray dye) if required.

What is Iodine-containing contrast media?

Iodine containing contrast media is sometimes called "x-ray dye". It is a colourless liquid which contains iodine and is injected to allow your organs to be more clearly seen during the scan. It does not "stain" your body and will normally be passed out in the urine.

How is Iodine-containing contrast media given to me?

Contrast can be given in a number of ways. It can be drunk orally, injected into an artery or vein or injected directly into a joint or other part of the body.

Will I feel anything when I have an Iodine containing contrast media injection?

When having an injection of iodinated contrast into vein, you may notice a very warm feeling that spreads throughout your body for about 20 seconds during and after the injection. This is often concentrated around the groin area and you may think that you are passing urine but you are not. It is very common and goes away quickly. Occasionally, patients feel nauseous (like vomiting) for a short time during and after the injection (see question on risks below).

Why do I need Iodine-containing contrast media?

Contrast media will provide additional information to the radiologist who is going to interpret your imaging (the pictures taken when you have your scan). This additional information will often lead to a more accurate diagnosis.

What are the risks of an Iodine-containing contrast media injection and oral contrast?

The risks and complications with contrast media can include but are not limited to the following.

- Leakage of contrast media outside the blood vessel. Mild leakages can be treated with ice, compression and go away on their own without further treatment. If severe or if you experience increasing pain, increasing swelling or enlarging redness you must see your GP or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.
- Kidney related side effects: If you already have severe kidney disease or diabetes or both, iodinated contrast media can temporarily make your kidney function worse. However, in the majority of cases, this will return to normal.

- Allergic reactions. This can occur within the first 5 minutes and have been known to occur up to a week after the injection. The most serious reactions usually occur within the first 10 minutes.

- a) Minor reactions occur in up to 1 in every 100 patients, usually go away on their own and do not require any special treatment. The reactions include face flushing, mild nausea and/or vomiting and mild itch.
- b) Moderate reactions occur in less than 1 in every 1000 people. These often need drug treatment and symptoms include prolonged vomiting, a generalised rash, or swelling of the face, mouth or throat, making it harder to breathe and swallow.
- c) Severe reactions including death occur in fewer than 1 in 100,000 people. These require emergency medical treatment and often admission to hospital for a period of observation.

What can be done to treat or prevent these side effects?

- The imaging practice will have personnel who are suitably trained, and appropriate medication and equipment to treat a contrast reaction.
- If you have abnormal kidney function and it is decided that you need contrast media, you may need a few hours of clear fluid given intravenously (directly into a vein) through a "drip" before your procedure to reduce the chance of your kidney function getting worse. Intravenous fluids may be continued after the procedure as well.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

As a general rule, administration of any drug to a pregnant woman, including contrast media, needs to be carefully considered. There is no medical evidence that contrast media can harm the unborn baby or foetus, but at the same time there are no large studies that conclusively prove that it is safe. Less than 1/1000th of the contrast media dose given to the mother enters the breast milk so there is no reason to stop breastfeeding if you need to have contrast media, as your milk will not harm your baby.

What happens after I leave the department, practice or hospital where I had my injection?

If you become or feel unwell or notice anything wrong, go to your nearest emergency department or GP. Serious reactions to contrast very rarely occur more than 1 hour after the contrast is given.

This information is credited to Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiology (RANZCR). www.ranzcr.com.au