

# UNDERSTANDING CONTRAST MEDIA: A GUIDE FOR YOUR RADIOLOGY EXAM

## Understanding X-ray Contrast: What You Need to Know

Contrast media, commonly known as “dye” is a special liquid injected through a small tube placed in your forearm vein during a CT scan, MRI scan, or Fluoroscopic procedures. This liquid plays a vital role in X-ray imaging, providing detailed information about blood vessels and organ inside the body. Most CT scans, MRI scans, and fluoroscopic procedures are performed with the use of contrast to enhance the clarity of the images.

## Before Contrast is Administered: Your Safety Comes First

Before the contrast is injected, your healthcare provider will conduct a screening to identify any factors that might cause an adverse reaction, potentially putting you at risk. Some reactions to contrast may include:

### Mild:

- Nausea & vomiting
- Itchiness
- Headache
- Flushing
- Hives
- Skin rash

### Moderate:

- Abnormal heart rhythms
- High/Low blood pressure
- Wheezing
- Severe hives
- Shortness of breath
- Severe skin rash

### Severe:

- Profound low blood pressure
- Cardiac arrest
- Convulsion
- Kidney damage
- Anaphylactic shock

### Injection site reactions:

- Extravasation (swelling, contrast leaks into surrounding tissues)
- Inflammation (itchiness)
- Pain & burning sensation

*All of these are rare, and most are temporary, often requiring no treatment or simple first-aid measures.*



In certain situations, especially when a known or suspected condition involves the stomach or bowel, you may be required to drink a contrast mixture or water shortly before your CT scan, MRI scan, or fluoroscopic procedure.

Additionally, for specific examinations involving the stomach or bowel, contrast media may be administered rectally. However, this method is only used when it is absolutely necessary for diagnostic purposes.

## Post-Contrast Scan Care: Ensuring Your Well-Being

Following your contrasted scan, it is essential to stay hydrated. Drinking approximately five glasses of water can aid in flushing out the contrast injected during the procedure. Our healthcare team will monitor you after the scan to identify and manage any potential complications, ensuring your safety and comfort.

## Important Considerations: Your Health Comes First

Serious side effects from contrast media are uncommon. However, being aware of the following rare reactions can help ensure timely care if needed.

### Kidney Stress:

In rare cases, contrast media may affect kidney function, particularly in people with diabetes or existing kidney conditions. If you are at higher risk, your doctor may recommend follow-up with a kidney specialist. Severe cases are very rare.

### Extravasation Concerns:

Very occasionally, contrast can leak into the tissue around the injection site. If this occurs, prompt assessment and treatment will be provided. In rare cases, a surgical opinion may be required.

### Allergic Reactions:

Allergic responses to contrast media are uncommon and usually mild. Please inform your healthcare provider about any known allergies so appropriate precautions can be taken.



**If you experience any of these symptoms during your scan, immediately inform your doctor or the department staff.**

## Your Safety is Our Priority: Open Communication Matters

**Your safety and well-being are our top priorities.**

If you have any concerns about the procedure, potential risks, or notice any unusual symptoms after your scan, please speak with your healthcare provider. We are here to support you, answer your questions, and ensure your experience is as safe and comfortable as possible.



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