

Use of contrast agents containing gadolinium

Information for patients with kidney disease

What is a contrast agent?

Your doctor/health care provider has ordered an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) that will involve the use of a “contrast agent.”

Contrast agents are substances that help make certain tissues, abnormalities, or diseases more clearly visible on MRI exams for radiologists, who interpret the MRI scans. These contrast agents contain an element called gadolinium.

The contrast agent that will be injected for your MRI scan is called _____.

Potential risks

- People who have severe/end-stage chronic kidney disease or who have acute kidney injury who receive a contrast agent with gadolinium have a very small risk of developing a disease called Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis (NSF).
- NSF causes skin to become thick, tight and scarred (usually on the arms and/or legs but sometimes also on the other parts of the outside of body. Scarring can also involve the heart, lungs, and muscles.)
- There is no reliable cure for NSF, although some patients have improved with treatment. Sometimes this disease gets worse and even causes death.
- For people who have severe/end-stage chronic kidney disease or acute kidney injury, the risk of developing NSF with the agents we use in our department is very low, and estimated to be less than 1 in 1000 (0.1%).

Note: Your doctor should have discussed the risks with you. If you are recommended for this procedure, it is because your doctor believes that the importance of injection of this contrast agent is greater than the possible risk.

Questions?

Please feel free to ask any questions to your MRI technologist or a radiologist before signing our standard consent form.