Contrast Enhanced MRI

Your doctor has ordered a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) test. It needs to be done using intravenous (IV) contrast. This test is to help your doctor learn more about your medical condition.

Contrast

The MRI contrast has a metal called gadolinium in it. This metal increases the diagnostic power of MRI. Some X-ray dyes used for other scans have iodine in them. MRI contrasts do not have iodine in them. They have been very safe for 20 years. More than 200 million doses have been given worldwide.

Risk

Some risks have been found. A link between gadolinium contrast and Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis (NSF) has been noted.

- NSF is a rare and debilitating disease.
- It was first described in 1997. It can affect the skin, muscles, and internal organs. The skin can become thick, hard, tight, dark, and itchy.
- NSF happens most often when people have very poor kidney function. People on kidney dialysis are at higher risk.
- It rarely causes death, but there is no good treatment choice.
- The cause of NSF and the role of gadolinium contrast are unknown.
- The risk of NSF from gadolinium contrast is also not clearly known. It is believed to be small, about 3 to 7%. This means 3 to 7 people out of 100 will get NSF.

Benefit

Your doctor and radiologist (a doctor who is an expert in medical imaging) have reviewed your health record. They believe that a MRI with gadolinium contrast is needed. Your doctors believe the benefits of the test outweigh the risks. It is more likely to give them the diagnostic information they need than any other test.
**Safety Steps**

- We will use the gadolinium contrast thought to pose a smaller risk of NSF.
- We will use the lowest dose we can.
- If you are on hemodialysis, you will have dialysis right after your MRI. This will help remove the contrast from your body.

**Warning**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warns that all gadolinium contrast may pose a risk of NSF.

**Questions**

Your radiologist will be glad to answer any questions you may have.