

Gadolinium: Patient Education

What is gadolinium?

It is a contrast agent used mainly for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or magnetic resonance angiography (MRA). This contrast agent, gadolinium, will help the radiologist make an accurate diagnosis. The contrast aids in visualizing certain organs, tissue and blood vessels that might not be visible without the contrast agent. The contrast is normally given intravenously through a small IV or butterfly needle.

Brand name(s)

Omniscan[®], Magnevist[®], optiMARK[®], Prohance[®], MultiHance[®]
There may be other brand names for this medicine.

Screening for possible contraindications:

You will be asked to fill out a patient history sheet. Some of the questions include possible allergies to the contrast, whether you have any renal/kidney problems, if you are diabetic, etc. The history sheet will help determine if giving you the contrast may put you at risk. If there are risks, the radiologist may decide not to use the contrast or he/she may consult with your healthcare provider to determine the risk versus the benefit of the information that the contrast will provide in making a diagnosis.

- Make sure you fill out your "Patient History for Contrast Media" form completely.
- If you are pregnant, think you might be pregnant or are breast feeding, let your technologist know as soon as possible.
- If your healthcare provider orders lab work within 48 hours of your gadolinium injection, let him/her know that you have had gadolinium injected and when. Some lab tests may be inaccurate due to the gadolinium in your system.

How this contrast is used:

- When your healthcare provider orders your exam he/she may order it with contrast or they may leave the decision to use contrast up to the radiologist that will be reading your scan.
- A trained healthcare professional will give you the contrast, normally through an IV.
- If you are having a MR Arthrogram, the radiologist will be injecting the contrast directly into the joint.
- It is important that you remain very still during and after the injection of the contrast so the imaging can take place at the optimum time.
- You may be instructed to drink extra fluids for the next 24 hours to help flush the contrast from your system.

Possible side effects when using this medicine:

Let your technologist know if you experience any of the following:

- Allergic reaction: itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Fever
- Lightheadedness or fainting
- Cold feeling, convulsion, tremors, or increased salivation
- Dry mouth, severe nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Severe rash or redness on your skin
- Slow or uneven heartbeat
- Sudden or severe headache

- Unusual muscle problems, unusual behavior, changes in vision
- Numbness, tingling, or burning pain in your hands, arms, legs, or feet
- Pale lips or tongue
- Ringing in ears or blurred vision
- Severe headaches or body pains

If you notice these side effects after your procedure, talk with your healthcare provider:

- Change in how much or how often you urinate, or blood in your urine
- Bad taste in your mouth
- Constipation
- Increased cough, difficulty in swallowing
- Increased sweating
- Mild skin rash or itching
- Pain, itching, burning, swelling, or a lump under your skin where the needle is placed
- Weakness and muscle pain

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Warning

The FDA has received additional information about a new disease, known as Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis (NSF) or Nephrogenic Fibrosing Dermopathy (NFD), which **may occur in patients with moderate to end-stage kidney disease** after they have had an MRI or MRA scan with a gadolinium based contrast agent. Symptoms may arise from 2 to 18 days post gadolinium injection.

Let your doctor know if you get any of the following conditions;

Skin and eyes:

- Swelling, hardening and/or tightening of your skin
- Reddened or darkened patches on the skin
- Burning or itching of your skin
- Yellow raised spots on the whites of your eyes

Bones and muscles

- Stiffness in your joints
- Problems moving or straightening arms, hands, legs or feet
- Pain deep in the hip bone or ribs
- Muscle weakness

For additional information you can go to this web site: <http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/gcca/qa-20061222.htm>