

Gadolinium (Dotarem®) contrast injection

This leaflet contains information on gadolinium (also known by its brand name Dotarem®), which is a contrast (dye) used during MRI scans.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you. Further information about the medicine is available in the manufacturer's patient information leaflet – please ask us if you would like a copy.

What is gadolinium?

Gadolinium (Dotarem®) is a clear colourless fluid that is used to make the images clearer during an MRI scan and help with diagnosis. A radiologist (a specialist doctor trained in studying scans and X-rays) or a senior radiographer (a specially trained member of the radiology team who performs the MRI scan) will decide if you need gadolinium and discuss this with you.

How is it given?

Gadolinium is injected into one of your veins via a needle or a cannula (a soft, hollow, plastic tube) during your scan. The cannula is inserted through your skin into a vein using a needle. Once the cannula is in place, the needle is removed leaving a small thin plastic tube in the blood vessel. This should be comfortable and will only be in place until your scan is finished.

Are there any side effects?

Gadolinium is not suitable for everybody and the radiographer/radiologist will decide if it is appropriate for you.

Gadolinium should not be used in patients with reduced kidney function, or hepatorenal syndrome (a condition involving reduced function of the liver and kidneys) since it causes nephrogenic systemic fibrosis in patients with severely reduced kidney function. **It is important that you tell the radiographer or radiologist before your scan if you have any history of kidney problems.**

Also please let us know if you have had a previous allergic reaction to a contrast agent.

Gadolinium may cause side effects in some people but these are usually mild and short lasting. Some of the more common side effects include injection site pain, nausea, vomiting, itching, rash, headache and parasthesia (abnormal skin sensation, such as prickling, burning or tingling). If you have any concerns about side effects, please speak to the staff caring for you.

Occasionally the injection may leak out from the vein to the tissues under the skin – this is known as extravasation. If this has happened, you will experience a stinging sensation where the contrast has gone into the tissue and it can be painful. If you would like more information

about this, please ask a member of staff for a leaflet called **What to do if the contrast injection leaks out (extravasation)**.

Allergic reactions to gadolinium contrast agents are uncommon but do occur. Most occur during the injection or within the first hour following administration; however, some can occur up to several days after.

Serious allergic reactions have been rarely reported. **Please seek immediate medical attention** if you have any of the following:

Swelling of face, mouth, hands, feet or throat
Difficulty in breathing or swallowing
Fainting

Coughing/wheezing/sneezing
Eye irritation
Rash/hives/itchy red skin

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, or experience any of the symptoms on page 1, please contact the MRI department on 020 7188 3933 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours, please contact your GP or go to your local emergency (A&E) department for advice.

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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