

MRI: Gadolinium Contrast

What you should know

This handout explains gadolinium, a substance that may be injected before a magnetic resonance imaging scan.

What is gadolinium?

Gadolinium is a *contrast dye* used for *magnetic resonance imaging* (MRI) scans. It is injected into the patient's body before the scan is done.

Why is it used?

Gadolinium makes abnormal areas (*lesions*) in the body show up more clearly in the MRI images. This helps doctors find and treat any health problems.

Gadolinium ensures the most accurate scans. This means it is the best contrast to use, both to diagnose a problem and when monitoring treatment.

Is it safe?

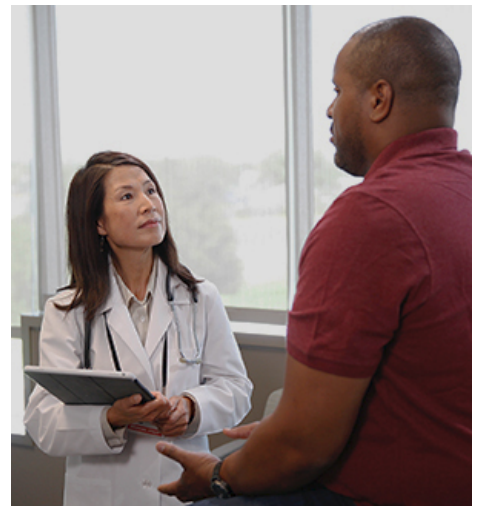
Gadolinium contrast is very safe for most people. But, talk with your doctor before receiving this injection if you:

- Have severe kidney disease
- Are allergic to gadolinium

Ongoing Research

Doctors around the world have been using gadolinium contrast for 30 years. Millions of people have received these injections.

But, doctors have found small deposits of gadolinium in patients who have received many gadolinium injections. These deposits have been found in their brains and in other parts of their bodies. This has occurred in all kinds of patients, whether or not they have kidney disease.



Be sure to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about gadolinium injections.

Since 2015, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been doing research to see if these gadolinium deposits could cause health problems. Radiology doctors are also doing research. To date, we have not seen any evidence that these small amounts of gadolinium cause health problems.

If there are any new findings, we will revise our guidelines for using gadolinium injections.

What if I have concerns about gadolinium?

If you have concerns about receiving this injection, talk with your radiology doctor before your MRI. Together, you will weigh the benefit of using gadolinium contrast against the unknown risk of having small amounts of gadolinium remain in your body.

How can I learn more?

Please read the manufacturer's guide on the type of gadolinium contrast you will be receiving. Your MRI technologist will give you this guide when you come to the Radiology department.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC Imaging Services:
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