

CT - iodinated contrast injection

Your doctor has requested a CT examination which may require the injection of an iodinated contrast agent. This medication is usually administered intravenously (injection into a vein) through a cannula (plastic tube). This allows your organs to be visualised more clearly.

Overall an CT examination with contrast is a relatively safe examination. Your doctor believes this to be an important diagnostic test for your medical management.

The injection is often but not always associated with a warm feeling in the face, neck and pelvis, sometimes accompanied by a metallic taste in your mouth. This usually lasts for a minute or two and then settles back to normal. Rarely nausea, chills and sweating may occur, usually at the time of the procedure. These symptoms alone are not allergic reactions.

Occasionally mild allergic reactions such as a rash, hives or sneezing can occur, and again these usually develop at the time of the procedure. Sometimes these symptoms may occur as a delayed reaction, most often within 30 minutes. These usually do not require treatment and settle rapidly.

Less commonly, more severe reactions may occur including asthma and circulatory disturbance. Severe life threatening reactions up to and including death have occurred but are very rare. The chance of this happening is in the order of 1 in 100,000 injections of contrast agent. The department has equipment and medications available to begin immediate treatment of serious reactions.

Having an allergy to another drug, food or insect bite causes a very minor but usually insignificant increase in the risk of an allergic reaction to intravenous contrast medium. If you have had intravenous contrast before without any adverse response, the chance of having a reaction to a subsequent injection is reduced but not zero.

You will be given a questionnaire to complete. Feel free to speak with any of the staff regarding any further questions or information you may require before proceeding with your CT examination.

Patients who have poor kidney function (renal impairment) or are taking Metformin for diabetes must have had a recent blood test (within the last three months), the results of which will help the radiologist to determine if x-ray contrast can be given. If you have any queries regarding this please contact Cabrini Medical Imaging using the relevant number below, or have had a reaction to iodinated contrast for a previous CT examination please notify staff at the time of booking your appointment.