

Managing contrast extravasation (tissuing) following a CT/MRI examination

Other formats

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Information for patients

This leaflet provides information to patients where contrast extravasation has occurred following a CT/MRI examination.

What is extravasation?

Contrast (x-ray dye) is usually administered through a cannula which will have been placed in a vein in your arm/hand. On rare occasions, contrast can leak into surrounding tissues; this is known as extravasation or 'tissuing'.

What happens next?

If this has happened, you will experience a stinging sensation where the contrast has gone into the tissue and it can be painful. This will usually wear off after about 30 minutes. The radiographer will remove the cannula and will apply a cold compress and your arm/hand will be elevated. You may also have some swelling of the arm or hand.

If the extravasation is severe, a doctor will examine you before you leave the department and advise you if any further treatment is necessary.

Sometimes you may need another injection of contrast to complete the scan. If necessary, this will be discussed with you.

Is there anything I can do at home?

- Keep your arm elevated as much as possible until the swelling has gone down
- Use an ice-pack or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a clean tea towel over the site. Never place ice directly on skin as it may cause frostbite, and do not leave it on for more than 15 minutes at a time
- After the pain subsides, a **warm compress** may be used to improve blood flow and absorption of fluid. This can be alternated with the cold compress

- Firm massage of the affected area will help to disperse the contrast
- If the area is painful, take your usual painkillers.

Is there anything I need to look out for?

In most cases, this is a minor injury and does not require any treatment. However in a small number of cases, the injury is more severe and you will need to seek medical attention.

Important:

If you experience any of the following symptoms, please see your GP or attend your local A&E for advice, and take this leaflet with you.

- The pain becomes more severe and there is increased swelling of the arm or hand
- There are 'pins and needles' or altered sensation in the arm or hand
- The arm or hand changes in colour
- There is blistering or ulceration of the skin around the injection site.

Further information

Who should I contact if I have a problem or question?

Please call the CT/MRI scanning department on 01271 314130 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

What should I do in case of an emergency?

Please see your GP or attend your local A&E for advice, and take this leaflet with you.

References

The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust PIID429

To be completed by CT/MR radiographer

Contrast agent	Time and Date	Amount of extravasation	Site of extravasation

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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