



Gadolinium (Clariscan[®]) Contrast Injection for MRI

A patient's guide



Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you experience any of the symptoms listed above, please contact the **MRI Department** on 020 7288 5350 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm). Out of hours, please contact your GP or go to your local Emergency Department (A&E) 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 on 020 7288 5758.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or

whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet contains information on gadolinium (also known by its brand name Clariscan®), which is a contrast (dye) used during MRI scans. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you. Further information about gadolinium is available in the manufacturer's patient information leaflet – please ask us if you would like a copy.

What is gadolinium?

Gadolinium (Clariscan®) 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, thin 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 the 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. The radiographer or radiologist will decide if it is appropriate for you.

In people who have severely reduced kidney function or hepatorenal syndrome (a condition involving reduced function of the liver and kidneys), gadolinium should only be used with radiologist approval. This group of patients cannot excrete gadolinium through urine and the retained gadolinium may cause problems.

It is important that you tell the radiographer or radiologist before your scan if you have any history of kidney problems.

Please also 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
- Paraesthesia (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 happens, 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 our leaflet, Contrast injection leak guidance (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 later.

Serious allergic reactions are rare; however please seek immediate medical attention if you have any of the following:

- Swelling of the face, mouth, hands, feet or throat
- Difficulty in breathing or swallowing
- Fainting
- Coughing/wheezing/sneezing
- Eye irritation
- Rash/hives/itchy red skin.