

# Post-Procedure Instructions for Patients Receiving IV or Oral Contrast During CT or MRI Scans

Thank you for choosing our radiology practice for your imaging needs. Contrast agents are commonly used during CT (computed tomography) or MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans to enhance image quality and assist your healthcare provider in making an accurate diagnosis. CT scans may involve iodine-based contrast administered intravenously (IV) or orally (such as barium sulfate or iodine solutions). MRI scans typically use gadolinium-based contrast via IV, though oral contrast is occasionally used for specific studies. These agents are generally safe, but following these post-procedure instructions can help reduce potential side effects and support your recovery.

These guidelines are general and do not replace personalized advice from your physician. If you have specific health conditions (such as kidney disease, diabetes, or allergies), please follow any additional instructions provided by your care team.

## General Care After Your Scan

- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of fluids to help your body eliminate the contrast agent. We recommend consuming 2-3 liters (about 8-12 glasses) of water or other non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages over the next 24 hours, unless you are on fluid restrictions due to a medical condition. If you have kidney issues, consult your doctor about your fluid intake.
- **Resume Normal Activities:** You can return to your usual diet, medications, and daily routine immediately, unless your doctor advises otherwise. Avoid driving if you feel dizzy or if sedatives were used during the procedure.
- **Monitor the Injection Site (for IV Contrast):** Check the area where the IV was placed for bruising, redness, swelling, or pain. A small bruise is common and should resolve within a few days. Apply a cold compress if needed.
- **Rest if Needed:** Most patients feel fine after the scan, but if you experience mild fatigue, rest as necessary.

## Potential Side Effects to Watch For

Contrast agents are well-tolerated by most people, but side effects can occur. They are usually mild and temporary. Contact your healthcare provider if you notice any concerning symptoms. Gadolinium-based contrast (MRI IV) is less likely to cause allergic reactions than iodine-based contrast (CT IV or oral), but both can rarely lead to delayed reactions up to 48 hours later.

- **Common Mild Effects (Usually Resolve Quickly):**
  - For IV contrast: Warm or flushed feeling, metallic taste in the mouth, mild nausea, headache, or dizziness during or shortly after the injection.
  - For oral contrast: Nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, diarrhea, or constipation.

- **Allergic Reactions (Rare, But Possible):**
  - Skin rash, itching, hives, or redness.
  - Swelling of the face, lips, or throat.
  - Wheezing, coughing, or sneezing.
- **Other Effects:**
  - Vomiting, abdominal discomfort, or changes in urination (e.g., if you have pre-existing kidney concerns).

## When to Seek Medical Attention

- **Emergency Situations:** Go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 immediately if you experience severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, severe swelling, or profound dizziness. These could indicate a serious allergic reaction.
- **Non-Emergency Concerns:** Contact your primary care physician or an urgent care center if you develop a rash, persistent nausea, unusual swelling at the injection site, or any other new symptoms within 48 hours.

## Special Considerations

- **Patients with Diabetes:** If you take metformin (or medications containing it, such as Glucophage or Janumet) and received iodine-based contrast (CT IV or oral), stop taking it for 48 hours after the procedure. Have your kidney function checked before resuming, as advised by your doctor.
- **Patients with Kidney Issues:** You may need follow-up blood tests to monitor kidney function, especially if your glomerular filtration rate (GFR) is low. Discuss this with your physician.
- **Breastfeeding Mothers:** Small amounts of contrast may pass into breast milk. For IV contrast (CT or MRI), pump and discard milk for 24-48 hours after the scan, or consult your doctor for guidance. Oral contrast is generally considered safe, but discuss with your physician.
- **Future Scans:** Inform your healthcare providers of any reactions you experience, as it may affect future contrast use.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact our office at (251) 263-7600 during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM) or your healthcare provider. For after-hours emergencies, call 911.

Your health and safety are our top priorities. Thank you for trusting us with your care!