



## Diagnostic Imaging Department

# Contrast Injection (Gadolinium)

This leaflet contains information about contrast injection (dye). The contrast used in MRI is Gadolinium-based and is known under its trade name as Dotarem® or Primovist®. Please read this information leaflet carefully and if you have any further queries, speak to the radiographer or radiography department assistant looking after you. Further information is available in the manufacturer's information sheet. Please ask if you would like a copy.

### What is it and why is it used?

Dotarem® and Primovist® are Gadolinium-based contrast agents. This is a type of contrast that is injected into a vein. Dotarem® or Primovist® are colourless liquids and are used to make images clearer on an MRI scan which helps with diagnosis. A consultant radiologist (specialist doctor trained in studying scans and x-rays) will decide if you need an injection of contrast agent and, if it is needed, this will be discussed with you.

### How is it given?

It is given intravenously, ie through a cannula (a soft, hollow plastic tube) inserted into a vein in either the arm or back of the hand. This remains in place until the end of the scan.

### What happens to the contrast?

The contrast is injected into the blood stream and will then circulate around the body. The contrast will naturally pass through and leave the body through urination.

### Possible side effects

Contrast is not suitable for everybody, and the radiologist will decide if it is appropriate for you. A condition known as Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis can be caused in patients with severely reduced renal function.

**Please tell the radiographer or radiologist if you have a history of kidney problems.**

**Please let us know if you have had a previous allergic reaction to any contrast agent.**

Side effects or allergic reactions are very rare and are usually mild and short-lasting. The most common side effect is a rash. Other side effects include, but are not limited to, headaches, dizziness, nausea, sleepiness, flushing or feeling cold. 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 rarely reported. If you experience any swelling of your face, mouth, hands, feet or throat, any coughing/wheezing/sneezing, difficulty in breathing or swallowing, eye irritation, fainting or rash/hives/itchy red skin, **you must seek medical attention immediately.**

### **Advice:**

- If you experience any of the side effects listed above during the scan, please inform the radiographer immediately
- If side effects persist, please contact your GP or Emergency Department for further advice
- If you have any known kidney problems, or are pregnant or breastfeeding, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging department.

### **Contact Numbers:**

We hope that you have found this leaflet useful. If you have any questions or concerns about the information provided, please contact the MRI department on 01305 255397 (Monday - Friday 9am-5pm). Out of hours, if you require further advice following an injection of contrast agent, please contact your GP or Emergency Department.

You can also contact NHS direct 24 hours a day on 0845 46 47 or [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

### **About this leaflet:**

Author:	Hannah Peel, MRI Superintendent
Written:	May 2019
Updated & Approved:	July 2022
Review Date:	July 2025
Edition:	v2

If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)



**INTEGRITY | RESPECT | TEAMWORK | EXCELLENCE**

© 2022 Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Williams Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2JY  
[www.dchft.nhs.uk](http://www.dchft.nhs.uk)