



Delayed Reaction to IV Contrast

Follow-up instructions

This handout provides instructions to follow if you have a delayed reaction after receiving contrast through a vein during an imaging study.

What is IV contrast?

Contrast is a dye that shows up on imaging studies such as CT scans, MRIs, or angiography procedures. When contrast is given into a vein, it allows veins, arteries, and some organs and structures in your body to show up more clearly. Contrast injected into a vein is called *IV contrast*.

What should I do after an IV contrast study?

After having an injection of contrast, drink extra fluids to help your body flush the contrast from your system. Drink 2 or 3 extra glasses of water within 4 hours of your scan.

Contrast Reactions

Reactions to IV contrast are rare, but they can happen. They can vary from mild (sneezing) to life-threatening (anaphylaxis). Reactions may include:

- Sneezing.
- Hives or an itchy feeling.
- Tightness in the throat, or difficulty breathing.

These reactions may occur right after the contrast is injected or several hours later, sometimes after you have left the clinic or medical center.

Treating an IV Contrast Reaction

Treating reactions is very important. Any sign of a reaction should NOT be ignored.

All reactions must be assessed by a health care professional. This may mean going to the nearest Emergency Department if the reaction develops after you have left the clinic or medical center. You may be given medicine to treat your reaction.

Questions?

Call 206-598-6200

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Imaging
Services/Radiology:
206-598-6200

What should I do if I think I am having a reaction, but have left the clinic or medical center?

If you feel you are having a reaction, have left the clinic or medical center, and your symptoms are:

- **Mild** (itchy and/or sneezing):
 - Call UWMC Radiology Department at 206-598-6200 and ask to speak with a radiologist.
 - Explain that you recently had an IV contrast study and what symptoms you are having. The radiologist will provide you with follow-up instructions.
- **More severe** (difficulty breathing):
 - Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

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