

## GADOLINIUM CONTRAST AGENT

### INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS



### WHAT IS GADOLINIUM CONTRAST AGENT?

Gadolinium is the chemical name for a colourless dye which is also called a "contrast agent". It has been used safely and effectively for many years and holds all the required Regulatory Licences for use in the United Kingdom. Gadolinium is administered through one of your veins by means of a simple injection, after which it disperses around your body and is soon naturally excreted by your kidneys. It rarely causes any side effects whatsoever, but if you experience any of the symptoms detailed below, please inform the Radiographer immediately.

### WHAT IS GADOLINIUM USED FOR?

Gadolinium is used during many MRI examinations to allow the Radiologist (a doctor specialising in the interpretation of medical images) to view your body structures with greater clarity, enabling him/her to report your scan with greater accuracy.

### WHAT WILL THE PROCEDURE INVOLVE?

When you arrive for your appointment, we will ask you to complete a safety questionnaire, if you haven't already done so. This will enable us to ensure that it is safe for you to have the Gadolinium injection. The Radiographer will check this with you before your scan begins. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have at this stage. You will routinely have a series of 3 or 4 scans performed before the Gadolinium injection is administered. The Radiographer will then remove you from the scanner to administer the Gadolinium.

The Radiographer (who is specially trained in administering contrast injections) usually administers the Gadolinium injection, but sometimes it may be necessary for the Radiologist or another Doctor to do this.

The procedure for administering Gadolinium is similar to that of having a blood test. A tight band will be placed around your arm, and you may be asked to open and close your hand a few times. Your skin around the injection site will be cleaned with a cold swab, before the injection takes place. During the injection, you may feel a mild sensation in your arm as the Gadolinium passes into your blood stream. This is perfectly normal. After the injection, a swab will be placed over the injection site before you are returned to the scanner for further scans to be taken.

### ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

Gadolinium has been used for over 15 years in adults and children in the United States, Europe and Japan, with very few serious complications having been reported. In a very small number of cases, (less than one in one thousand), patients may experience a hypersensitivity or allergic reaction to Gadolinium.

**Please advise the Radiographer If you have are breast feeding.**

### ARE THERE ANY SIDE-EFFECTS?

Potential side effects following the administration of Gadolinium (which are very rare) include mild headache, light headedness, urticaria (itching skin), wheezing (difficulty with breathing), nausea and vomiting and local pain. If you experience any of these symptoms or if you feel in any way unwell, following the administration of

Gadolinium, please inform the Radiographer immediately. Similarly, should you experience any of these symptoms during the 24 hour period following the administration of Gadolinium please contact the Treatment Centre in the first instance, using the number provided above. If the reaction is extremely severe, please call the Emergency Services.



## WHAT IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

If you have a query about the use or administration of Gadolinium contrast agent, please call the Radiology Department between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday on 01749 333 600 or ask the Radiographer before your MRI examination.

## WHAT IF I AM BREAST FEEDING?

Gadolinium is excreted in very low amounts (only about 0.01% of the amount administered) in human breast milk, and this occurs for about 24 hours after it is administered. It is therefore recommended that mothers do not breast feed for 24 hours after Gadolinium is administered. It is advisable that you express sufficient milk prior to the MRI examination to meet your baby's feeding requirements for the 24 hour period following your MRI examination.