

PATIENT INFORMATION

The Management of Extravasation of Contrast Media during a CT scan: Patient Information

During some examinations, you will need to have an injection of contrast into a vein. Occasionally this contrast agent can leak out of the blood vessel into the surrounding tissues (extravasation). This can lead to swelling, bruising and pain at the site of the injection. The contrast agent will be absorbed by the surrounding tissues usually within a couple of days, but you may continue to feel some discomfort for a few days longer.

During the injection you may have felt:

- Pain at the site of the injection.
- Tightness or pressure around the injection site.

Over the next few days you should:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Apply a cold compress to the injection site 2-4 times a day for no longer than 20 minutes at a time.
- If possible, keep the injection site elevated (raised). Try resting your arm on 2 pillows at night until the swelling goes down.
- Take your usual painkillers for any localised pain.

Remember that any bruising could get worse before it gets better.

In most cases this is a minor injury and does not require any treatment. However, in a small number of cases the injury is more severe and you will need to seek medical attention.

You should check the injection site two or three times daily for any of the following signs:

- Blistering of the skin at the site of the injection.
- Reddening of the skin, or any change in skin colour around the injection site.
- Any feeling of heat or coldness of the skin at or around the injection site.
- A swelling that is not improving after three days.
- The pain becomes more severe and is not controlled by your usual painkillers.

If you experience any of these symptoms or have any other concerns, you should contact your GP for further advice.

To be completed by the CT radiographer

Contrast Agent	Date and Time	Amount of contrast extravasated	Amount of saline extravasated	Site of extravasation

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.