



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Preventing An Allergic Reaction to Contrast Dye

This information will help prevent an allergic reaction to the contrast dye you'll receive during your scan.

About Contrast Dye

Sometimes, contrast dye (or contrast) is used in imaging scans to help your doctors see your organs better. There are different kinds of contrast used. Computed tomography (CT) scans and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) use different kinds of contrast.

Preventing an Allergic Reaction to Contrast with Medication

In the past, you had an allergic reaction to contrast you got during a scan. You're having another scan that requires the same type of contrast. To prevent an allergic reaction, you'll need to take a steroid medication before your scan. Remember, having an allergic reaction to one type of contrast doesn't mean you need premedication for another type of contrast.

There are different medications that you can take to prevent an allergic reaction. Your doctor will tell you which one you need and give you a prescription for it.

You're scheduled to have a _____ scan on _____ at _____ AM | PM.

Prednisone

If you're taking prednisone before your scan, you'll have to take 3 doses of it. Take the first dose 13 hours before your scan, the second dose 7 hours before your scan, and the third dose 1 hour before your scan. If you have any questions about when to take your medication, ask your nurse.

Write down the time you need to take your medications below.

Take 1 (50 milligram) tablet of prednisone at:

_____ AM | PM (13 hours before your scan) on _____ (date)

_____ AM | PM (7 hours before your scan) on _____ (date)

_____ AM | PM (1 hour before your scan) on _____ (date)

Take 50 milligrams (mg) of diphenhydramine (Benadryl®) with your last dose of prednisone 1 hour before your scan.

Methylprednisolone

If you're taking methylprednisolone before your scan, you'll have to take 2 doses of it. Take the first dose 12 hours before your scan and the second dose 2 hours before your scan. If you have any questions about when to take your medication, ask your nurse.

Write down the time you need to take your medications below.

Take 1 (32 milligram) tablet of methylprednisolone at:

_____ AM | PM (12 hours before your scan) on _____ (date)

_____ AM | PM (2 hours before your scan) on _____ (date)

You may also need to take 50 mg of diphenhydramine 1 hour before your scan. Your doctor will tell you if you need to do this.

Other medications

You may need to take other medications or a different medication instead. If you do, your doctor will write more instructions in the “Notes” section.

Take: _____ at _____ AM | PM, 1 hour before your scan.

If you have any questions about your premedication plan, call the doctor that ordered your premedication.

Notes

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Preventing An Allergic Reaction to Contrast Dye - Last updated on December 23, 2019
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center