

What to do if the contrast injection has leaked out (extravasation)

What is extravasation?

The contrast dye that you were given can leak out from the vein into the tissues under the skin – this is known as extravasation. If this has happened, you will experience a stinging sensation where the contrast has gone into the tissue which can be painful and can also cause swelling of the arm or hand. This usually wears off after about 30 minutes.

What will happen if there has been a leak?

Whilst you are still in the department your arm will be massaged and elevated as soon as the leak happens. A cold compress will be applied to the area if required and, if possible, we will then continue with the scan. A doctor will examine you if the extravasation is severe and advise you if any further treatment is necessary.

Is there anything I can do at home?

Massage the area where the contrast has gone into the tissue.

If there is swelling:

- Elevate the affected arm as much as possible. At night, keep it elevated on two pillows (**you should continue to do this until the swelling has gone down.**)
- Use an ice-pack or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a clean tea towel over the site. **Never place ice directly on skin as it may cause frostbite, and do not leave it on for more than 15 minutes at a time.**

If the area is painful, take your usual painkillers.

Is there anything I need to look out for?

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.

Important

If you experience any of the following symptoms, you should seek advice from your GP or attend your local accident and emergency (A&E) department and take this leaflet with you:

- The pain becomes more severe and is not controlled by simple painkillers
- There is increased swelling of the arm or hand
- The arm or hand changes in colour
- There are pins and needles or altered sensation in the arm or hand
- There is blistering or ulceration of the skin around the injection site.



CONTRAST MEDIA REACTION FORM

PATIENT IDENTIFICATION LABEL

Following a CT scan with an intravenous injection of contrast media this patient has experienced a reaction as detailed below

DATE & TIME	CONTRAST AGENT USED	AMOUNT OF CONTRAST EXTRAVASATED	AMOUNT OF SALINE EXTRAVASATED	SITE OF EXTRAVASATION

DETAILS OF REACTION & CARE GIVEN (To be filled out by a medical professional)

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR GP / OUT-OF HOURS DOCTOR/ PHARMACIST IF YOUR CONDITION DOES NOT IMPROVE AND TAKE THIS FORM WITH YOU.

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
01225 428331 www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.