

X-ray Dye

You have been booked to have a test that uses x-ray dye. X-ray dye is also called contrast media.

Why is x-ray dye used?

X-ray dye is used to help the doctor, called a radiologist, see your blood vessels and organs on the x-ray. X-ray dye contains iodine.

X-ray dye is injected into your veins for tests such as:

- Intravenous pyelogram (IVP) – to help the radiologist see a kidney
- Venograms – to help the radiologist see blood vessels
- CT scans (CAT scan) – to help the radiologist see an organ

How will I feel after the x-ray dye is injected?

After you receive the injection, you may feel a warm flush like you have wet your pants. You may also have a funny or metallic taste in your mouth. These feelings are normal and last only a few seconds.

Will I react to the x-ray dye?

Some people react to the x-ray dye but this is not common.

Mild reactions such as itchiness or hives usually pass without treatment or respond right away to medication. Sometimes, a patient may have a mild reaction 24 to 48 hours after the dye injection. This may show up as a rash that may be red and itchy. The rash will go away on its own. If you are concerned, call your family doctor.

Rarely, patients may have a more serious reaction that usually occurs at the time of the injection. This may include low blood pressure, irregular heart beat, kidney failure or death. The risk of these reactions is very small.

The radiologist is aware of your risks. In his or her opinion, the information from this test will help in the diagnosis and outweighs any risks. If you have questions, please ask the nurse or technologist.

Instructions for going home

Drink 8 to 10 glasses (2000 to 2500 ml) of water today and tomorrow. This will help clear the x-ray dye from your system. X-ray dye is a clear fluid and most of it leaves your body quickly through your urine.

If you have a heart condition where you have been told to drink less fluids, tell the nurse or technologist right away.

Does the x-ray dye pass into breastmilk?

Yes, a small amount passes into breastmilk and even less is absorbed by the baby. If you are breastfeeding, talk to the nurse or technologist before your test.

Let us know if you:

- have diabetes
- take Glucophage (metformin), Avandemet, Glumetza, Janumet or Glycon
- have poor kidneys, just one kidney or have had kidney surgery
- think you may be pregnant
- have questions