

Your child's healthcare provider has recommended an MRI scan. During this exam, your child may be given a Gadolinium Based Contrast Agent (GBCA) through their intravenous line (IV). If IV contrast has been ordered by your child's doctor, it is because it may make it easier for us to find and identify certain diagnoses and conditions earlier and/or more accurately than a non-contrast MRI study.

GBCA has been approved for clinical use in the United States for more than 30 years. Hundreds of millions of doses of GBCA have been safely given to patients throughout the world since GBCAs were first developed and approved for human diagnostic use in 1988. A tiny amount of the gadolinium within the GBCA that we administer to those who need it may be found to stay in several parts of your child's body for months or years. The long-term possible effects of this have not yet been determined, but, to date, all studies have found no harmful effects from this retention.

There are different types and brands of GBCA that can be used for your child's MRI exam at CHOP. The amount of gadolinium that may stay in the body differs among the available GBCA. Some GBCA may leave more gadolinium in the body than others, but the type used may also be able to find smaller and/or earlier abnormalities than another GBCA at the same given dose or may have other safety advantages. Here at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, we use the safest GBCAs available for all of our MRI exams.

If a GBCA has been ordered for your child's MRI exam, it has been chosen for the maximum diagnostic quality and the dose has been calibrated for your child's specific condition, age, and body weight.

Not all MRI studies need to use a GBCA. If your child's study does need to use one of these agents, our pediatric radiologists are specially trained in the use of GBCA and have reviewed your child's medical history, in conjunction with the referring physician. In addition, here at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, our practice is to follow "ALARA - As Low as Reasonably Achievable," which means we will deliver the least amount of GBCA necessary for proper diagnosis of your child.

In addition to this CHOP family information sheet we refer you to the Medication Guides prepared by the manufacturers of the three GBCAs that we currently use and are provided to you at this time. We recommend that you review them carefully before your child receives a GBCA.

Should you have any questions about any of the above, please do not hesitate to ask to speak with a CHOP Radiology staff member. Our CHOP Schedulers will direct your call to the appropriate resources. 215-590-7000.