

WHY SHOULD CONTRAST BE USED WITH MRI AND OTHER MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING TOOLS

Explanation (source: National Institute of Health, US National Library of Medicine)

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) uses a large magnet and radio waves to look at organs and structures inside your body. Health care professionals use MRI scans to diagnose a variety of conditions, from torn ligaments to tumors. MRIs are very useful for examining the brain and spinal cord.

Contrast materials, also called contrast agents or contrast media, are used to improve pictures of the inside of the body produced by x-rays, computed tomography(CT), magnetic resonance (MR) imaging, and ultrasound. Often, contrast materials allow the radiologist to distinguish normal from abnormal conditions.

Contrast materials are not dyes that permanently discolor internal organs. They are substances that temporarily change the way x-rays or other imaging tools interact with the body.

When introduced into the body prior to an imaging exam, contrast materials make certain structures or tissues in the body appear different on the images than they would if no contrast material had been administered. Contrast materials help distinguish or "contrast" selected areas of the body from surrounding tissue. By improving the visibility of specific organs, blood vessels or tissues, contrast materials help physicians diagnose medical conditions.

What To Take With You

By having any of these medical diagnostic imaging tools conducted without contrast, the ability to properly diagnose the medical condition for which this test was ordered, is reduced; depending on the reason the test was ordered, the ability to evaluate and create a timeline diagnosis of any previous medical condition that may have affected the present medical condition, is seriously impaired if contrast is not utilized. Based on the prospective medical treatment contemplated, such as surgery, this previous timeline and ability to distinguish between old and new diagnoses, may be gone for ever.

Made available to clients 2019 January