



Clinical Practice Guideline

Contrast Media Administration to Pregnant or Potentially Pregnant Patients

Overview: Studies of contrast (iodinated and gadolinium-based) in pregnancy are limited. Effects of contrast on the human embryo or fetus are unknown. It must be assumed that all contrast media cross the blood-placenta barrier into the fetus. No data are available to assess the rate of clearance of contrast agents from the amniotic fluid. It is not possible to state with certainty whether contrast agents present a risk or pose no risk to the fetus. Patients of child-bearing potential should be screened for the possibility of pregnancy.

Target Audience: Imaging nurses, radiological technologists, radiologists, radiology residents, radiology managers, healthcare providers, interns, and medical students

Content/Strategies:

- All imaging facilities should have policies and procedures in place to reasonably attempt to identify pregnant patients before exams are performed.
- The American College of Radiology recommends that the radiologist do the following:
 - Document in the patient record or radiology report that
 - The information needed cannot be acquired through other means (e.g., ultrasound).
 - The information needed affects the care of the patient and fetus *during the pregnancy*.
 - The referring physician thinks it is not prudent to wait until the patient is no longer pregnant to obtain the information.
 - Obtain informed consent from pregnant patients undergoing imaging studies that use ionizing radiation and iodinated contrast media.
 - The patient should demonstrate that she understands the risks and benefits of the procedure and the contrast to be administered.
 - The patient is aware of alternative diagnostic options available (if there are any).
 - The fetus is shielded from radiation whenever possible during studies, though most exams use less than 5,000 mrem of radiation.
 - The patient wishes to proceed.

Suggested Readings

American College of Radiology. (2008). *Manual on contrast media* (Version 6.0). Reston, VA: Author.

Health Physics Society. (n.d.). Radiation exposure and pregnancy fact sheet. McLean, VA: Author. Retrieved from <http://hps.org/documents/pregnancyfactsheet.pdf>

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