

IMAGING

# Extravasation

Preparing you for your admission, making you comfortable and cared for during your stay, and supporting you when you leave



KING EDWARD VII's  
HOSPITAL

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***This leaflet has been written to provide information to patients receiving intravenous contrast agents.***

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### **What is extravasation?**

Extravasation is the leakage of drugs or contrast agents outside of the vein and into the surrounding tissues. With some contrast agents, this may lead to an immediate painful reaction and result in local tissue damage.

You may have noticed pain, stinging, swelling, tightness or other changes to the skin at the site of administration, or the radiographer or nurse may have noticed that the drug was not flowing in easily.

### **Why did this happen?**

Extravasation is a rare but known complication of the intravenous administration of drugs and/or contrast agents. It may be difficult to prevent this even though we take all possible precautions. The important thing is that it has been detected and treated.

### **Why is extravasation a problem?**

The area may be sore for a short while and extravasation can lead to pain, stiffness, bruising and in some cases tissue damage. However, if the extravasation is recognised and treated early then there should not be any long-term effects.

### **What treatment have I received to prevent tissue damage?**

The radiographer has given you the

recommended treatment for the extravasation. You should be aware that although this will minimise the chance of developing further problems, it is important that you keep checking the area over the next few weeks. You can apply a cold pack to the area up three times a day if that helps with the mild discomfort.

### **Checking the area:**

Once a day, check the area for the following:

- Has the area changed colour or increased in redness?
- Is the area blistering, peeling, hardening or flaking? (typically occurs 1-2 weeks post extravasation)
- Is the area more uncomfortable?
- Is the pain making it difficult for you to exercise your arm or hand?

If you answered **YES** to any of the questions in the checklist above or if you have any other concerns you should contact your GP and/or our staff on 0207 467 4317 / 4327

**Contact us**

Please contact the Imaging team about any general concerns on 0207 467 4317. However, if you experience any symptoms of concern please contact your GP or go to your local Emergency Department (A&E).

**Your comments and concerns**

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak

to the staff caring for you. For support or advice please speak to your consultant or the Imaging department on 0207 467 4317.

**Language and accessible support services**

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.



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