

MRI Contrast Dye Could Cause Incurable Disease

Gadolinium Blamed For Problems

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Hundreds of people are becoming afflicted with an incurable disease caused by a simple Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) procedure.

The disease is Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis (NSF) and many medical professionals believe the only way to contract the disease is from gadolinium, a dye used in certain MRI procedures.

"It is the most awful disease that I have ever seen in my life," said Peter Burg, an attorney representing close to 100 clients who are suing the manufacturers of gadolinium. "And what makes it doubly awful is that it was manmade."

Loveland residents Greta Carolus is one of Burg's clients.

In August 2006, Carolus was preparing for a kidney transplant. Prior to the procedure she needed an MRI with gadolinium contrast. The gadolinium is said to improve the quality of the picture.

Four days after the procedure, Carolus was hospitalized. She later learned she had contracted NSF.

NSF is a disease that leads to lesions and debilitating hardening of the skin.

NSF put Carolus in a wheelchair and made everyday life a challenge.

"I am a registered nurse, but I have not worked since the day this happened," said Carolus. "I wouldn't wish this on anybody; my worst enemy I wouldn't wish it on. This is just a terrible disease."

For people with healthy kidneys, gadolinium is considered safe.

The concern is that the chemicals that surround the gadolinium and make it safe for the human body sometimes breakdown. For patients with weakened kidneys, the gadolinium cannot be excreted properly, leaving it inside the body for an extended period of time.

When I found out it was the dye it was devastating because it was something that didn't need to happen, said Carolus.

According to Carolus attorney, Burg, who is representing more than 100 patients with NSF, the 5 companies that manufacture gadolinium contrast knew they were toxic to patients with kidney insufficiency.

They knew how toxic it was, they may not have known the specific harm that was going to be caused but they knew the results were likely to be catastrophic, said Burg.

According to General Electric Healthcare spokesman Ryan Fitzgerald, GE is committed to patient care and safety.

GE manufactures Omniscan, the dye Carolus received.

Fitzgerald said there is no definitive causal relationship between gadolinium-based contrast given to patients with moderate to severe renal impairment..and NSF.

Last year though, the FDA issued a black box warning on all gadolinium dyes which stated patients with kidney insufficiency who receive gadolinium can develop a fatal disease.

Since the FDA warning was issued, hospitals across the country, including here in Colorado have taken measures to protect patients.

7News checked with 13 hospitals across Colorado.

Longmont United and Rose Medical require their patients to read and sign a consent form before receiving any gadolinium.

St. Anthony does the same blood test on anyone over the age of 60.

If there are just warnings that come out to everybody, said Carolus.

Carolus knows these changes will not help her, but she is pleased to see hospitals taken precautions so fewer patients develop NSF.

Carolus urges anyone preparing to have an MRI with gadolinium ask for testing prior to receiving the contrast.

- For information about Gadolinium contrast from the *US Food and Drug Administration*, [click here](#).
- For information about Gadolinium contrast from the *Burg Simpson Lawfirm*, [click here](#).
- For information about Gadolinium contrast from its manufacturer, *GE Healthcare*, [click here](#).

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