Interventional Radiology (IR)
Risk information for inpatients

Read this brochure to learn about:

• Interventional Radiology (IR) procedures
• The risks of IR procedures
• Problems to what to watch for
What is Interventional Radiology or "IR"?

Interventional Radiology (IR) finds and treats different conditions using x-ray equipment, including:

- fluoroscopy (real time x-rays)
- CT scan
- ultrasound
- or a combination of these three

How long will my IR procedure take?

This will depend on the disease and condition being treated and the procedure you are having. The time can be from 30 minutes to several hours.

Please ask the Interventional Radiologist when you come down to IR. He or she will know best how long your procedure will take.

What do I need to know about my IR procedure?

Your unit nurse or doctor will talk to you about the type of procedure you are having, what part of the body is being looked at and any other information that is important for you to know.

They will tell you how to prepare for your procedure.
What are the risks of an IR procedure?

Your unit nurse or doctor will talk with you about the IR procedure you are having, and any risks to you. Some of the risks they may talk with you about include:

**Intravenous (IV) contrast (dye) reaction**

If you are having a procedure that uses x-ray (such as fluoroscopy or CT), you may need to have some IV contrast. This is a dye that is put through IV catheter (by needle) in your hand or arm. The dye helps guide the doctor doing your procedure.

*If you have had a reaction to IV contrast dye in the past, please tell your nurse or doctor on your unit right away. There are special precautions that must be taken before you come to IR for your procedure.*

Most people do not have any reaction to the dye used during IR procedures.

- Some people may have a mild reaction to dye, like itching, sneezing or hives. These reactions usually happen right away and go away on their own. Taking medicine like Benadryl® might also help.

  Less common reactions are slight wheezing, or swelling around the eyes.

- In very rare cases, some people may have a serious reaction, such as a drop in blood pressure, shortness of breath, seizures, kidney damage, and in extremely rare instances, even death. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please talk to the Interventional Radiologist when you go for your procedure.
Radiation exposure

- Some IR procedures expose you to ionizing radiation (x-rays). Exposure to ionizing radiation could increase your lifetime risk for cancer. IR procedures expose you to **low amounts** of radiation, so they are considered low risk unless you have repeated tests.

- A fetus (unborn baby) exposed to x-rays may have a slightly higher chance of defects or childhood cancers. If you may be pregnant, please tell your doctor right away.

If you have any questions about your personal radiation risk, please talk with your doctor.

Our staff in IR are very aware of the risks of ionizing radiation and will use as small an amount as possible to get the best pictures.

Infection

Any procedure where the skin is broken or pierced by a needle carries a risk of infection. The risk of infection with an IR procedure is very low. To lower your chances of getting an infection, we work under sterile (germ-free) conditions for all of our procedures.

Bleeding

Any procedure that puts a catheter or needle inside a blood vessel has certain risks.

These risks include damage to the blood vessel, and bruising or bleeding at the puncture (needle) site. There is only a small chance of an IR procedure causing bleeding.

We are careful to minimize your risk of bleeding. This includes giving you a blood test before you come for your procedure to make sure your blood can clot normally.
What should I watch for after my IR procedure?

Tell your nurse or doctor **right away** if you notice ANY of these warning signs:

- **Rash or hives**
  This could happen up to 7 days after being injected with contrast dye. If you get a rash or hives, you will need to take medicine before having IV contrast dye in the future.

- **Bleeding at the puncture (needle) site**

- **Sudden pain**

- **Feeling faint or weak**

- **Changes to your puncture (needle) site** such as:
  - It becomes red and warm to touch
  - It becomes painful, swollen or both
  - It starts leaking fluid that is clear, white, yellow or green in colour

- **Fever** (temperature higher than 38 °C)