



An initiative of the ABIM Foundation



Radiocontrast Material and Seafood Allergy

MYTH

Patients with seafood allergy will also have an allergic reaction to radiocontrast media because of the iodine contained in both.

FACT

Patients with a history of seafood allergy are NOT at elevated risk for anaphylaxis from iodinated contrast media.



This myth has been perpetuated in the medical and lay communities, but there is no cause and effect connection between contrast media reactions and seafood allergy.

Patients with a history of seafood allergy are NOT at elevated risk for anaphylaxis from iodinated contrast media. Similarly, patients who have had anaphylaxis from contrast media should NOT be told they are allergic to seafood.

Causes of Reactions

Physiochemical properties of radiocontrast media (i.e., hyperosmolarity) are the mechanisms for allergic reactions and anaphylaxis to these procedures.

Tropomyosin (a fish equivalent to the muscle protein) is the antigen responsible for allergic reactions to seafood.

Neither reaction is related to iodine content.

Facts about Iodine

- Iodine is not an allergen.
- We all have iodine in our bodies.
- Most table salt contains iodine.
- There have never been any reported IgE-mediated (allergic) reactions to iodine.
- Prior reactors to radiocontrast media should not be identified as having "iodine allergy".

There are patients at an increased risk for having serious or more severe reactions to radiocontrast materials, including those with history of anaphylaxis to radiocontrast media, those with asthma, and patients with cardiovascular disease taking certain medications such as beta-blockers.

This report is for you to use when talking with your healthcare provider. It is not a substitute for medical advice and treatment. Use this report at your own risk.

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