

Table 3 Categories of Reactions

Classification of Severity and Manifestations of Adverse Reactions to Contrast Media

Mild

Signs and symptoms appear self-limited without evidence of progression (e.g., limited urticaria with mild pruritis, transient nausea, one episode of emesis) and include

Nausea, vomiting	Altered taste	Sweats
Cough	Itching	Rash, hives
Warmth	Pallor	Nasal stuffiness
Headache	Flushing	Swelling: eyes, face
Dizziness	Chills	Anxiety
Shaking		

Treatment: Requires observation to confirm resolution and/or lack of progression but usually no treatment. Patient reassurance is usually helpful.

Moderate

Signs and symptoms are more pronounced. Moderate degree of clinically evident focal or systemic signs or symptoms, including:

Tachycardia/bradycardia	Bronchospasm, wheezing
Hypertension	Laryngeal edema
Generalized or diffuse erythema	Mild hypotension
Dyspnea	

Treatment: Clinical findings in moderate reactions frequently require prompt treatment. These situations require close, careful observation for possible progression to a life-threatening event.

Severe

Signs and symptoms are often life-threatening, including:

Laryngeal edema (severe or rapidly progressing)	Convulsions
Unresponsiveness	Profound hypotension
Cardiopulmonary arrest	Clinically manifest arrhythmias

Treatment: Requires *prompt* recognition and aggressive treatment; manifestations and treatment frequently require hospitalization.

Note: The above classifications (mild, moderate, severe) do not attempt to distinguish between allergic-like and non-allergic-like reactions. Rather, they encompass the spectrum of adverse events that can be seen following the intravascular injection of contrast media.