

How contrast taste can improve the patient experience – Stephanie’s Story

Stephanie’s Story

Stephanie McCarty began undergoing frequent CT scans in 1999, sometimes as often as every three months. She dreaded each time she had to go in for her scan.

The contrast mixture tasted so bitter, it made her feel nauseous even though they mixed the contrast with fruit drinks. Because of this, she had difficulty drinking the contrast mixture within the required time frame.



The technologists did their best to try to get her to drink “just a little bit more”, but that made her feel even more anxious and frustrated and her exams took longer to complete than either the imaging staff or she anticipated.

“When I started getting contrast for CTs it tasted metallic and was hard to swallow. I couldn’t get it down and the technologists would continually urge me to finish drinking it in the time frame required to complete the scan. After awhile it would make me sick, and that sometimes lasted into the evening and the next day. I had horrible stomach issues.”

Even though Stephanie tried different imaging centers, the scenario was always the same.

“I’ve been in several different facilities, undergoing different types of scans and it seemed like each one tried something new or different in hopes of making the contrast taste better and go down easier.”

Stephanie pointed out that many of these centers tried to improve the taste of oral contrast with Crystal Light®, Gatorade®, Kool-Aid®, or fruit juices.

The oral contrast challenge:

Regardless of institutional excellence, occasional challenges with oral iodinated contrast occur at *every imaging center.*

Consumption of contrast material is difficult for some patients. Their inability to comply with drinking instructions can result in disruption to workflow, under-utilized scanners, inadequate studies, and even cancellation of procedures – all affecting the bottom line. In addition, future revenues may be lost when patients choose to go elsewhere for their scans hoping for a more pleasant experience.

Fortunately there’s Breeza®, a specially formulated sugar-free, tropical fruit-flavored beverage with a bitterness blocker to specifically mask the taste of oral iodinated contrast.

For the imaging centers using Breeza, the results have been dramatic – improved drinking compliance by patients leading to smoother workflow and more complete scans. Patients who get frequent scans request Breeza by name or refer to it as “the good stuff.”

Stephanie McCarty, who has dealt with the contrast taste challenge throughout her many years of undergoing CT scans, is a testament that Breeza truly makes a difference in the patient experience.

She went on to add that because of her horrible experiences, it would carry over into her personal life, mentioning how the Kool Aid served at her niece's birthday party automatically reminded her of her scans and made her feel nauseous.

“When I was given Breeza, it was the first time I had anything that seemed to make a big difference for me.

On the first sip I said, ‘Oh, this tastes much better,’ and I asked the girls at the reception area about it. They said it was new and I told them it was much easier to swallow.

“I was able to get it down in a much shorter time frame than anything I had tried previously and I actually drank all of it, I didn't dump any of it out!”

For Stephanie, Breeza made all the difference. Not only was she able to complete her scan on time, but there was no lingering stomach discomfort afterward. Because of that she was able to return home after the study and forget that she had undergone a stressful imaging procedure.

“With Breeza I don't seem to have any upset stomach. It was easy! I drank it, went home, and was able to forget about it. Mentally, it is nice to have the scan out of the way and be able to go on with your day and forget you had to be scanned.”

According to Stephanie, the overall quality of her patient experience is better with Breeza.

“It's stressful leading up to the scan so it is nice to be able to put it behind you once it is over and move on. With Breeza, I'm not dreading the next scan because I know that I'm not going to sit in the waiting room for 90 minutes drinking something that tastes bad and upsets my stomach. And when you get scans every 3 to 6 months, they come around a little too quick – especially when it doesn't make you feel well. Anything that makes it more pleasant is obviously a bonus for the patient.

“I also feel more like a person and less like a clinical case with Breeza. I sit with a bottle that looks just like a fruit-flavored beverage that is visually more appealing and looks appetizing. It is so much nicer than sitting there with a Styrofoam® cup and a straw and now I don't necessarily get identified as a patient by others who are seated nearby.

“Anything that makes the process more pleasant makes such a difference when you are in for a medical procedure. In my case, I have to have IV's and blood drawn at the same time and I'm worried about all kinds of things including the results, so anything you have that makes it a more pleasant experience is crucial to the situation.

“If I knew somebody was going to have a scan and that they had a choice where to go, I would definitely recommend this center because I know they would be able to have Breeza. It tastes better, goes down easier, and they can get on with their day.”

Breeza®, manufactured by Beekley Medical™ is the first flavored beverage designed specifically to mask the taste of oral iodinated contrast used in abdominal CT studies.*

This interview took place during the filming of a Breeza testimonial video at St. Elizabeth East in Lafayette, Indiana. Watch the video at www.beekley.com and hear from Stephanie and the facility regarding their experience with Breeza.



*Breeza® flavored beverage does not contain contrast.