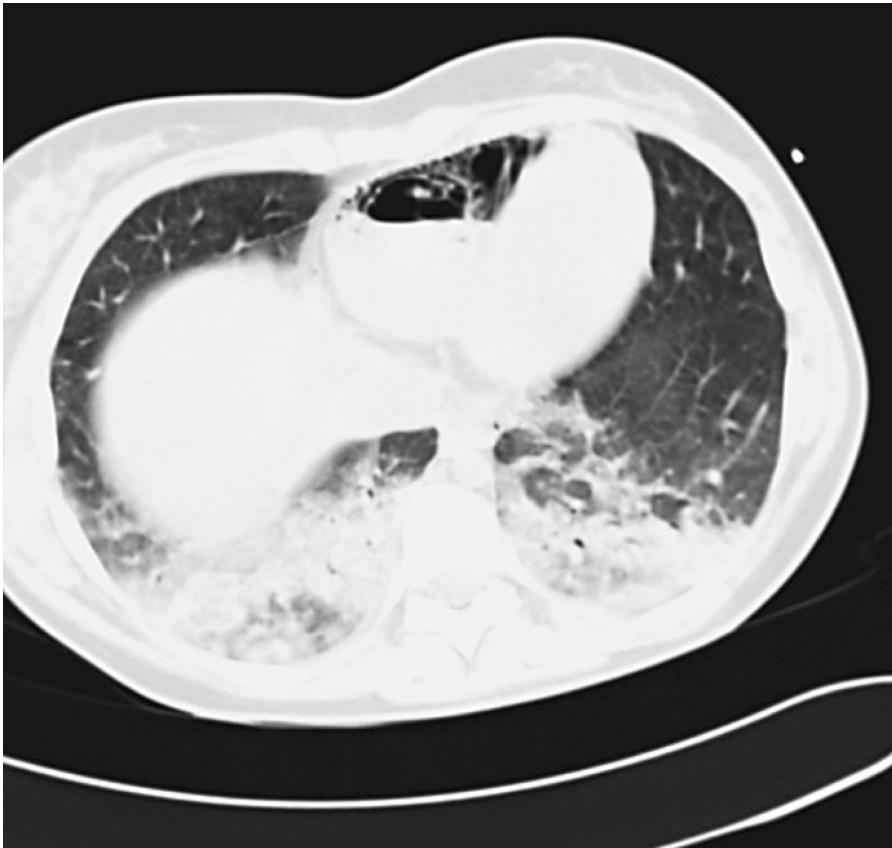


## Air Embolism after the Insertion of a Central Venous Catheter



**A** 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS INVOLVED IN A CAR ACCIDENT AS A PASSENGER. Before she was transported by helicopter to a hospital, a central venous catheter was inserted. She was admitted to the emergency department with multiple injuries. The initial computed tomographic scan of the chest showed both a lung contusion and air in the right ventricle. Air embolism is a rare but potentially fatal complication of procedures involving central venous catheters. Air can enter the central venous system during puncture or through an opening in the intravenous infusion tubing during disconnection. Approximately 100 ml of air per second can pass through a 14-gauge needle. The patient died from the severe injuries three days after the accident.

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