Portal Vein Embolization

A portal vein embolization may be done before your liver resection surgery to help grow healthy liver. This procedure is done to make sure you have enough liver left to help your body work properly.

What is Portal Vein Embolization?

During the procedure a needle is placed through your skin into your liver. Your doctor will find the blood vessel going to the side of your liver that has the largest part of the tumor. This blood vessel is then filled with particles (embolized) to block the flow of blood to that area of the liver. This will help shrink the side of your liver with the tumor and make the healthy side of your liver grow.

What should I do to prepare for my procedure?

- Tell your doctor if you take any medicines or supplements that thin your blood or prevent clots. You may need to change these medicines or adjust the amount you take before your procedure is done.

These medicines include:

- Aspirin
- Clopidogrel, brand name Plavix
- Prasugrel, brand name Effient
- Ticagrelor, brand name Brilinta
- Apixaban, brand name Eliquis
- Ticlopidine, brand name Ticlid
- Warfarin, brand name Coumadin
- Enoxaparin, brand name Lovenox

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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- Dabigatran, brand name Pradaxa
- Fondaparinux, brand name Arixtra
- Rivaroxaban, brand name Xarelto
- Cilostazol, brand name Pletal
- Edoxaban, brand name Savaysa

- **If you have a stent, do not stop taking your medicines to prevent clots without first talking to the doctor who put in the stent.** For more information, ask a member of your health care team for the patient education handout on protecting your stent.
- If you take aspirin or medicines like aspirin for arthritis pain, your doctor may have you take a different medicine in the weeks before your surgery or procedure.
- If your surgery or procedure is canceled for any reason, call your doctor because you may need to restart the medicines you take to thin your blood or prevent clots.

- **Do not** eat anything after midnight the night before your procedure. Unless told otherwise by your doctor, you can have sips of clear liquids (water, apple juice, coffee or tea without milk) until 6 am the day of your procedure.

**What should I expect on the day of my procedure?**

- After you check in a nurse will check your blood work and start an IV.
- A member of your health care team will talk to you about your procedure and answer any questions you may have. You will then be asked to sign a consent form.
- You will be asked if you need to use the bathroom. Once your procedure starts you will not be able to move.
- You will be taken to a procedure room and asked to lie down for the procedure. If you are cold, have pain, or any other discomforts, please tell your nurse.
- When your procedure is done, you will be taken to the recovery area. Your nurse will watch you to make sure your pulse, blood pressure, and oxygen levels are good and that you have no bleeding from the needle site.
What should I expect after my procedure?

- After recovery, your nurse will take you to your hospital room and help you get comfortable. Tell your nurse if you are in pain or need any medicine.

- **Use your call button to ask for help before you try to get out of bed or out of a chair.** You will be given medicine that could make you dizzy, so it is important to ask for help when you move around.

- You will be able to eat and drink, but do so slowly. Some of the medicines you will be given could make your stomach upset. Do not take pills on an empty stomach. Your nurse can get you something to eat before you take your pills.

- You will stay in the hospital overnight to make sure you are able to drink fluids and take your medicine. Your bloodwork will be checked in the morning and if it is good, you will be allowed to leave.

- You may have pain in your right side, your abdomen, your back, or in your right shoulder. Your doctor will order you a medicine that you can take for pain. The first 3 to 5 days are usually the most uncomfortable after your procedure.

- You may also have a fever after your procedure. You may take up to 2000 mg each day of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).

- 4 to 6 weeks after your procedure, your doctor will do CT scan or MRI to see if your healthy liver has grown. This will help your doctor know when it is safe to do your liver resection surgery.

When should I call the doctor?

If you have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor’s office. The phones are answered 24 hours per day. If you reach the answering service at night or on the weekend, they will call the doctor, who will then call you back.