Treating Fluid Overload with Ultrafiltration

What is fluid overload?

Fluid overload happens when more fluid is going into your body than is coming out. It can happen with heart failure because the heart is not able to pump or relax as well and fluids build up in other parts of your body. Common signs of fluid build-up are:

- Fast weight gain of 2 pounds overnight or 3 to 5 pounds over 5 days
- Swelling of feet, ankles or legs
- Pain or swelling in the stomach
- Problems breathing or shortness of breath when lying flat
- Feeling tired
- Increases in blood pressure

Treatment for Fluid Overload

The most common treatments for this condition include:

- Low salt (sodium) diet.
- Limited fluid intake.
- Medicines called diuretics or water pills.
- Ultrafiltration (UF) is also called peripheral UF or aquapheresis. This treatment removes extra fluid (water) and salt by gently filtering blood through a machine and then returning it to the body.

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Learn more about your health care.
About Ultrafiltration

This treatment is given over 8 hours. Each hour, about half a pound of water is removed from the body. Your doctor or nurse will adjust the amount of fluid to be removed during the treatment. This is done to protect your heart and to regulate the amounts of sodium, chloride and potassium in the body.

You will be sent home after the treatment, unless more than one treatment for fluid removal is needed. Your doctor will talk with you if this is needed.

To Prepare for Treatment

- **Do not take your water pill (diuretic) the morning of treatment.**
- Bring your insurance card and photo ID to the hospital with you.
- Bring your medicines, in their original containers with you. **You will take your morning medicines in your room at the hospital, with the exception of your water pill.**
- You will have a TV in your room, but please bring other items to spend your time, such as books, cards or games.

The Day of Treatment

- You will be in checked in by a nurse and have 2 intravenous lines (IVs) and/or a special IV started for the ultrafiltration. IVs are used for treatment, to give medicines or perform blood draws.
- A blood thinning medicine is given before and during treatment to prevent clotting in the blood filter.
- During UF, blood leaves the body from one IV and is slowly filtered by a machine to remove extra fluid. The blood with less water goes through a different IV and back into the body. The extra water is collected in a bag on the machine to be weighed by your nurse.
- Your nurse will check on you often during the day, and adjust the amount of water to be removed based on how your body responds to treatment.
- During UF, you will be able to go to the bathroom with assistance.
- During UF, you will be able to eat. A special heart diet will be ordered.
After treatment, the IVs may be removed or left in place for future treatment. If they are removed, a bandage will be put on the IV site.

**How will I feel from UF treatment?**

- You may feel better right away, or it may take some time. This depends on your condition and how much extra fluid needs to be removed.
- **Tell your nurse right away if you have these side effects during treatment:**
  - Dizziness
  - Nausea
  - Pain or bruising at the IV site
  - Other new or unusual signs

**When to Call the Doctor**

**Bleeding from the IV Site**

- If you have any bleeding, put pressure directly on the site for 5 to 10 minutes to stop the bleeding. Keep the pressure on the full time. If the site is on your arm, raise your arm about the level of your heart to help stop bleeding.
- **If bleeding does not stop,** keep holding pressure and have someone take you to your local emergency room or call 911 for help.

**Signs of Infection**

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius
- Chills
- Redness at the IV sites
- Little or no urine production
- You feel light headed
Your Scheduled Visit

You are scheduled for ultrafiltration on: ______________________(day).

Please arrive at the Ross Heart Hospital at the Wexner Medical Center at __________________(time).

- Plan to Park in the SAFEAUTO Hospitals Parking Garage (1585 Westpark Street) and take the bridge on the 2nd floor into the Ross Heart Hospital.

- Check in on the first floor at the Registration desk.

- Do not take your water pill the morning of your treatment. Bring your other medicines in their original containers with you to the hospital.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.