Inferior Vena Cava Filter Placement

Why do I need a filter?
Your body can develop a blood clot in the vein in your legs which is called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). This blood clot, or a piece of this clot, can move from your leg to your heart and lungs. A clot in your lung is called a pulmonary embolism. If you have one or two of these problems and cannot take blood thinners, you are a candidate for an inferior vena cava (IVC) filter. The filter will trap any clot or pieces of the clot to keep them from your heart or lungs.

What can I expect before my filter placement?
- Do not eat anything by mouth 4 hours before the procedure.
- You may have your blood drawn before the procedure.
- If you don’t have an IV, one will be placed by the nurse.
- If you are allergic to IV dye (contrast) or iodine, please let your doctor know right away.

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Where and how is the procedure done?

You will be taken to the Interventional Radiology Suite where you will meet a doctor called an Interventional Radiologist. The Radiologist will explain the procedure to you in detail and have you sign a consent form.

During the procedure, you will lie flat on your back. Your neck or leg will be cleaned with liquid soap and covered with a sterile drape to help prevent infections. A numbing medicine will be injected under the skin to prevent discomfort when the tube (catheter) is placed. Other than the sting or burning of this medicine, you should not feel pain with the procedure. However, if you are having any other discomfort, let the Radiologist know and you will be given medicine in your IV to help with the discomfort.

A plastic tube (catheter) will be placed into your leg or neck and guided into the large vein in your abdomen. X-ray dye will be injected through the tube and pictures will be taken of the large vein in your abdomen that connects your leg veins to your heart. This vein is called the Inferior Vena Cava. Next, the Radiologist will thread the filter through the catheter and place it in the vena cava where it attaches itself to the wall to stay in place. It will filter your blood, trapping any pieces of a clot as they flow from your legs.

Once the filter is placed, the catheter will be removed and pressure will be applied over the site where it went into the skin for about 5 minutes. When the bleeding has stopped, a band-aid will be placed over the site. It may be removed after 24 hours.

What can I expect after my filter placement?

- You will need to lie flat for 2 hours if your leg was used to place the filter. After the 2 hours you may get up to go to the bathroom with help.
- If the filter was placed into a vein in your neck, you will be able to do normal activities.
- Your nurse will check your neck or leg for bleeding after the procedure. Let your nurse know if you have any bleeding or pain at the site.
- Drink plenty of fluids, unless directed otherwise by your doctor. This will help clear the IV dye from your body.
- If the catheter was in your leg, limit bending at the waist for 48 hours.
• If you feel that you are going to cough, sneeze, or if you need to bear down for a bowel movement, apply gentle pressure to the puncture site with your hand.

• Do not climb stairs or lift heavy objects for 48 hours from the time you leave the hospital.

• Do not drive for 24 hours.

Home Care after Filter Placement

• A friend or family member must drive you home without making stops along the way.

• Limit your activity after this procedure to help your recovery and prevent problems. You must also have someone stay with you while you rest in bed or on the couch until the next morning. Get up only to use the bathroom.

• If you want to wash after the procedure, take a sponge bath. Wait until the next morning to shower or take a tub bath.

• Remove your band-aid the morning after the test. As you shower or bathe, wash the puncture site gently and pat it dry. Do not scrub the site.

• Gradually increase your activities the next morning, but do not plan on working the day after this procedure.

Possible Complications

• **Bleeding** - Bleeding can occur from the area where the puncture was done. Blood may spurt or drip from the site or it may form a lump (hematoma) or “goose-egg” under the skin.
  
  ➤ If bleeding occurs:

    Lie down on your back as flat as possible. Have someone apply firm pressure with a gauze pad or clean wash cloth to the puncture site for 10 to 15 minutes or until the bleeding has stopped. After bleeding has stopped, continue to lie flat with your leg straight for 60 minutes. When you get up, move slowly to keep from feeling dizzy or faint.
If bleeding occurs a second time:

Reapply pressure for 10 to 15 minutes. Lie flat on the floor for one hour. If bleeding is not stopped, call 911 or the Emergency Squad.

- **Clot Formation** - Clots can block circulation in your leg causing numbness, coldness and or pain. If you have any of these symptoms, call your primary care doctor right away.

- **Infection** - Call your primary care doctor or the Interventional Radiology Team if you have signs of infection at the puncture site. These signs include:
  - fever greater than 101 degrees F or 38 degrees C
  - swelling
  - warmth
  - drainage
  - redness
  - pain

If you have a question, concern or problem, please call the Interventional Radiology office at 614-293-2773.

If you need to contact Interventional Radiology in the evening or on a weekend, please call (614) 293-8000. Ask the operator to page the Interventional Radiologist on call.

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.