



Information for Patients

Inferior Vena Cava Filter Removal

The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with information to help you understand more about having your inferior vena cava (IVC) filter removed.

IVC filter

You have had an IVC filter (a small metal device) placed in a large vein called the inferior vena cava (IVC) which drains blood from the legs and lower part of the abdomen.

It is possible to remove some IVC filters if they are no longer required.

It has been decided that your filter can be removed.

The procedure is very similar to the insertion procedure.

Are there any risks?

IVC filter removal is a very safe procedure. Serious complications are very rare. There may be a small bruise at the needle site and very rarely there may be damage to the vein or blockage of the inferior vena cava.

Occasionally the filter may have changed position, which can make it harder to retrieve.

All risks and benefits of the procedure can be discussed with the doctor before the procedure.

Am I required to make any special preparations?

Removal of an IVC filter is usually carried out as a day case procedure under local anaesthetic. If you have any allergies or have previously had a reaction to the dye (contrast agent), you **must** tell the radiology staff before you have the procedure.

You will not be able to drive after this procedure, therefore you should arrange for someone to collect you when you are ready to leave the department. Please leave all valuable items at home.

We need to know the clotting status of your blood before the procedure. Please telephone us if you are taking any of the following:

- Warfarin
- Sinthrome
- Rivaroxaban
- Dabigatran
- Apixaban

Or any other medication to thin your blood.

Please let us know if you think you may be pregnant.

Who will I see?

You will be seen by a specially trained team led by an interventional radiologist within the Radiology department. Interventional radiologists have special expertise in reading the images and using imaging to guide catheters and wires to aid diagnosis and treatment.

Where will the procedure take place?

The IVC Filter will be removed in the Angiography suite, which is located within the Radiology department. This should be the same place that the insertion was undertaken.

What happens during the removal?

The interventional radiologist will explain the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have and remember that even at this stage, you can decide against going ahead with the procedure if you so wish.

You will be asked to get undressed and put on a hospital gown. You will lie on the X-ray table, generally flat on your back. You may have monitoring devices attached to your chest and finger and may be given oxygen through a mask.

The procedure is performed under sterile conditions and the interventional radiologist and radiology nurse will wear sterile gowns and gloves to carry out the procedure. The skin near the point of insertion, usually the neck but occasionally the groin, will be washed with antiseptic and you will be covered with sterile drapes.

The skin and deeper tissues over the vein will be numbed with local anaesthetic. A special catheter (thin plastic tube) is inserted into a large vein in your neck or groin and moved into position to the site of the filter in the vena cava. Small amounts of dye (contrast agent) are used to check the position of the filter. A removable IVC filter has a small hook at one end that enables the catheter to capture the filter, close it, pull it into the catheter and then

withdraw it from the body.

At the end of the procedure, the catheter will be removed and pressure will be applied to stop any bleeding.

How long will it take?

Every patient is different, and it is not always easy to predict how long it will take, however, expect to be in the Radiology department for about 2-3 hours.

What happens afterwards?

Nursing staff will carry out routine observations, including pulse and blood pressure, and will also check the treatment site. You will generally stay in the department on a trolley for a couple of hours and you should be able to go home later the same day. Take it easy for the rest of the day but you can resume normal activities the next day.

Finally

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure.

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

Interventional Radiology

(0161) 276 8588, Monday to Friday, 8.30 am – 5.00 pm.