

## Inferior Vena Cava (IVC) Filter Retrieval

*If you have any questions, ask your doctor or nurse.*

An IVC filter was used to prevent blood clots from moving from the lower part of your body to your lungs. Guided by x-ray, this filter was placed in a large vein (IVC) found in your abdomen. The IVC brings blood from the lower part of your body back to the heart.

When the filter was placed, the plan was to remove the filter at a later time when:

- Your risk for blood clots decreased.
- You were placed on blood thinning medicines.

This handout describes:

- How the filter is removed.
- How to prepare for the procedure.
- Follow-up care needed after the filter is removed.

The filter is removed in the Interventional Radiology (IR) department. It does not require a hospital stay. The total time in IR is about 3 hours.

### Risks

As with any procedure there are risks. They include:

- Infection.
- Bleeding.

There is a small chance that the filter moved or changed position. If this happened the doctor may decide it is not safe to remove the filter and it will be left in place.

### Before the Procedure

Once your primary care doctor and the interventional radiologist agree it is time for you to have your filter removed, the procedure will be scheduled.

### ***At Home/Day of Procedure***

Most patients have IV medicine to relax them during the procedure, so:

- Do not eat solid foods 6 hours before the procedure.
- Stop drinking water and other clear liquids 3 hours before the procedure. You can take your medicines with sips of water if needed.
- You must have a responsible adult to assist you in getting home safely (outpatients only).

### ***What to Bring to the Hospital***

Please bring:

- Medical insurance information.
- Medicare card (for Medicare patients).
- List of allergies and current medicines (including the last time taken).

Please leave all valuables (jewelry, credit cards, money) at home. This includes body piercing jewelry and tongue studs. You may not wear any jewelry during surgery.

### ***Arrival***

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 E. Huron, across from the Feinberg and Galter Pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of the Feinberg and Galter Pavilions, and on the 1st floor of Prentice.

From home, you will come to the 4th floor of the Feinberg Pavilion, 251 E. Huron Chicago, 1 hour before your procedure. After you check in with the receptionist on the 4th floor, you and 1 member of your family will meet with staff that will bring you to the prep and recovery area. Here they will review your health history, medicines, and allergies. A short physical exam will be done. After reviewing the procedure and asking any questions you may have, you will be asked to sign a written consent.

You will change into a hospital gown. An IV (into the vein) line is placed in your arm or hand if you will be receiving IV medicine to relax you.

### **During the Procedure**

The nurse will help you lie on the exam table. You will be connected to heart and blood pressure monitors.

To access the IVC, one of 2 sites may be used:

- Vein in the neck (internal jugular).
- The groin vein (femoral vein).

The area around the site is cleaned with a special soap that may feel cold. It is then covered with sterile sheets. Numbing medicine is injected into the area. You will feel some burning as the medicine is given. Using sound wave images (ultrasound), the doctor inserts a small needle into the vein. Then a small tube (catheter) is threaded into the needle and slowly passed to the IVC. You may feel pressure, but you should not feel any pain.

Once the filter is removed, firm pressure is held over the puncture site for about 5 to 10 minutes. Then a small bandage or skin glue will be placed over the site. You will then be taken back to the prep and recovery area.

## **After the Procedure**

A nurse will monitor your heart rate, blood pressure, and the puncture site. Let the nurse know if you have any pain or discomfort. After about 1 hour,

- You will be discharged, or
- Return to your hospital room (inpatients).

Your nurse will review guidelines about your follow-up care. If you had medicine to relax you and are to be discharged, a responsible adult must assist you in getting home safely.

## **At Home**

### ***Diet***

You may resume your regular diet after discharge. You should drink at least six 8 oz. glasses of water over the next 24 hours. Water helps to clear the dye used during the procedure.

### ***Activity***

On the day you leave the hospital, limit your activities. No physical exercise or heavy lifting (greater than 10 lbs.) for the next 3 days. Do not drive for 24 hours after the procedure. You may resume all other daily activities 24 hours after the test.

Call the IR department right away at 312-926-5200 if you notice any of the following:

- Swelling or bleeding at the puncture site. If the site is bleeding hold pressure to the site for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Fever higher than 101° F.
- Redness at the puncture site, or increasing tenderness or discharge at the puncture site.

## Follow-up Care

Once your filter is removed you will now follow up with your primary care doctor. Whenever you see a doctor for the first time, you should mention you have had a history of blood clots and an IVC filter placed in the past. This is important if you are:

- Having surgery.
- Being treated for a new condition or taking new medicines.

If you are taking anticoagulation or blood thinning medicines, such as Coumadin<sup>®</sup>, Lovenox<sup>®</sup>, or Fragmin<sup>®</sup>, be sure to have the needed routine tests to check your bloods clotting time.

If you have signs of bleeding or bruising while taking these medicines contact your doctor.

If you have signs or symptoms of blood clots contact your doctor right away or go to the nearest emergency room. These symptoms include:

- Swelling, pain, or warmth in one of your legs.
- Sudden shortness of breath, coughing, chest pain, palpitations, or wheezing.

For more information about IVC filters and the IVC Filter Clinic, please visit our Web site at [www.ivcfilter.northwestern.edu](http://www.ivcfilter.northwestern.edu) or contact the IVC Filter Clinic at 312-926-5289.

## Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to [hlc@nmh.org](mailto:hlc@nmh.org).

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at [www.nmh.org](http://www.nmh.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar a el departamento de representantes para pacientes al 312-926-3112.*

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Developed by: The IVC Filter Clinic and Department of Interventional Radiology

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For more information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit [www.nmh.org](http://www.nmh.org).

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900915 (04/10)