

Patient information leaflet Inferior Vena Cava Filter Placement

Radiology department

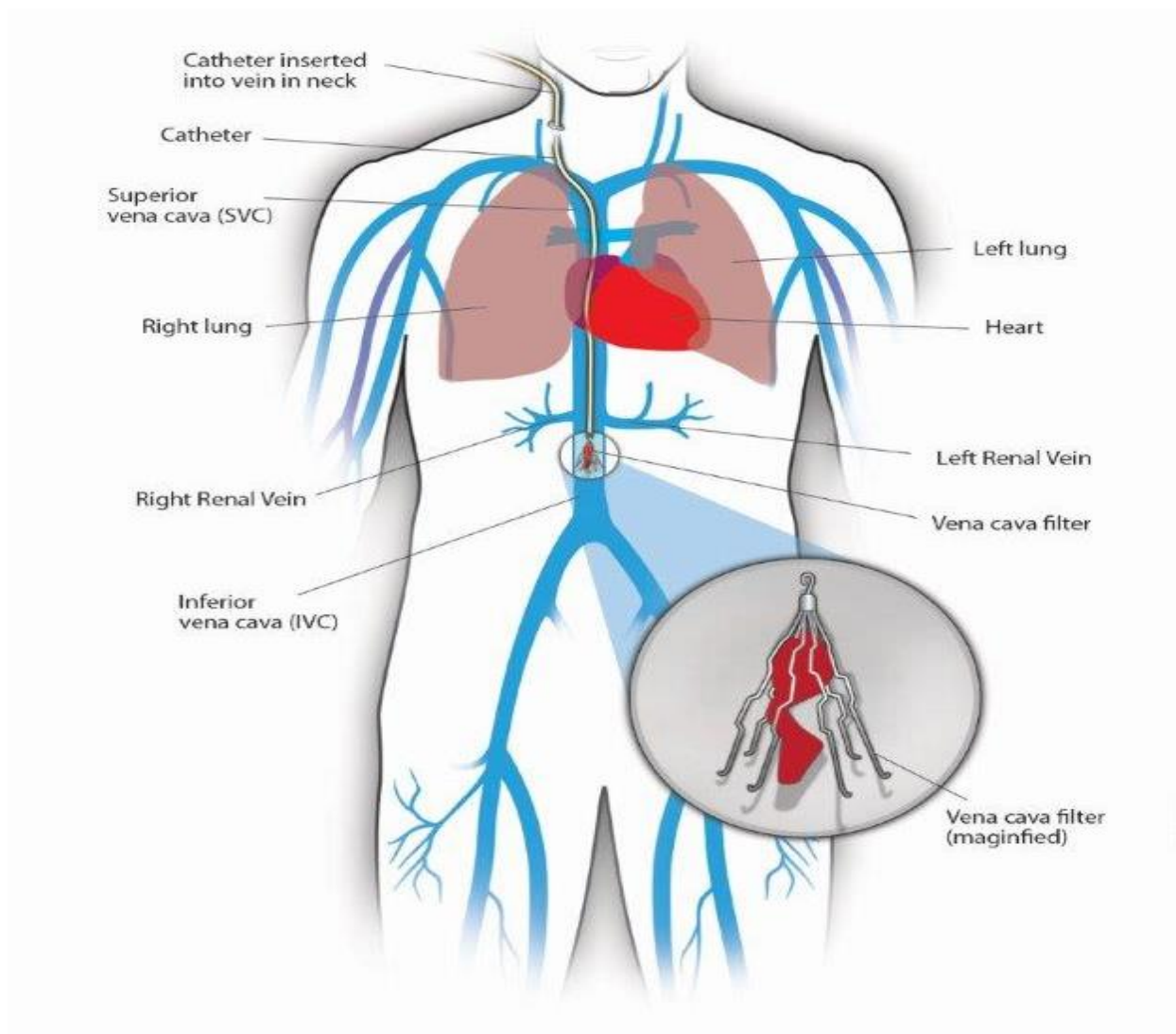
Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about having an inferior vena cava (IVC) filter inserted. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is an IVC filter?

An IVC filter is a small metal device usually placed in a large vein called the inferior vena cava (IVC) that drains blood from the legs and lower part of the abdomen.

The IVC filter allows blood to flow through normally but traps any large blood clots, stopping them from getting to your lungs.



Why do I need an IVC filter?

Your doctor should have explained the reason why you need this procedure.

It will help your doctor to decide on the cause of your symptoms giving clearer information to the specialists treating you.

Blood clots (thrombosis) sometimes form in the veins of the legs and pelvis. They are known as a deep vein thrombosis (DVT).

The clot can sometimes break free and enter with the blood flow into the lungs and make you very sick. This is called a pulmonary embolism (PE).

An IVC filter prevents a large PE by trapping a clot before it reaches the lungs.

The usual treatment for DVT and PE is drug treatment to thin the blood. This is usually with warfarin. In some patients, warfarin does not prevent further PEs, in others thinning the blood is too risky.

When this happens, patients are considered for treatment by inserting an IVC filter. Very occasionally, a patient is advised to have an IVC filter inserted even though they do not have a DVT or PE at that time.

Your doctors will explain the reasons why they think you should have an IVC filter.

Are there any risks?

X-ray radiation: All X-ray procedures involve exposure to radiation in varying amounts. The dose you get from a medical x-ray is very low, and your doctor has determined that the benefits of having the water-soluble enema outweigh potential risks.

The radiographer is present throughout your test, making sure that the dose is kept as low as reasonably possible and the duration and level of X-rays are kept to a minimum.

Contrast medium: A very small number of patients have an allergic reaction to the contrast medium (an iodine based solution often known as x-ray dye). This can be minor, severe, or even life threatening but the chances of this occurring are very rare. If you get an itchy rash or difficulty breathing during the procedure tell a member of staff, the team will provide appropriate treatment.

Before your examination begins the radiographer will ask you a series of questions about your medical history, including any allergies you may have. This will help us assess if you are at risk of an allergic reaction to the x-ray dye.

Procedure: An IVC filter insertion 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.

Extremely rarely, the filter can migrate which may require a further procedure to reposition the IVC filter.

Will I need an injection?

Occasionally, patients are given antibiotics, sedative and painkillers through a cannula placed in your arm.

Preparing for your procedure

Please do not have anything to eat for 4 hours prior to your procedure. You must still drink clear fluids such as water prior to your procedure.

The procedure is performed using local anesthetic and often sedation.

IVC filter procedures are usually carried out as a day case under local anesthetic, however you will be asked to bring an overnight bag because you may be admitted for observation.

Please leave any jewellery or valuables at home.

Please contact the booking team before your appointment if:

- you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you have had a previous allergic reaction to x-ray dye (contrast agent) or are allergic to iodine.
- If you weigh over 30 stone/190 kilograms
- If you have problems standing or need a hoist to transfer
- If you require an interpreter – please inform us as soon as you receive your appointment letter, and we will arrange an interpreter for you.

If you are unsure or have questions about your preparation, contact your doctor or the X-ray department for advice.

Allergies

If you have asthma or any allergies, especially to iodine or contrast medium (x-ray dye), please inform us in advance.

Medication

Please continue to take all medications as usual prior to your examination. If you are taking anti-coagulants (blood thinners) please contact the radiology nurse on the number below. You may be advised to stop for a certain period before the procedure or given alternative medication.

Getting to us

When attending The Princess Alexandra Hospital (Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX), follow the signage to the radiology reception, which is located on the ground floor, green zone. Please let the receptionists know that you have arrived for your appointment.

When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the radiology department at your given appointment time. A notification through text or letter should have been sent to you to confirm this appointment.

Can someone stay with me in the hospital?

You may have a friend or relative attend with you, but they will be asked to stay in the waiting area while you have your procedure.

Children are not allowed in the waiting area unattended. Our staff are not permitted to supervise children, so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your tests being rescheduled.

The day of the procedure

You will be shown to a cubicle and asked to undress and put on a gown; please bring a dressing gown if you have one. You may also be asked to remove jewellery, dentures, glasses, or other metal objects, which may show up on the X-rays.

The procedure

Your identification will be checked by a nurse and radiographer, a brief history will be taken; please tell the radiologist what medication, severe allergies, choking episodes or other medical conditions, such as thyroid disease and diabetes you may have.

Before the procedure, the interventional radiologist will explain the procedure and ask you to sign an electronic 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.

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.

You will lie on the X-ray table, generally flat on your back.

A small cannula (thin tube) will be placed into a vein in your arm. You may receive a sedative to relieve anxiety, as well as painkillers if required.

You may have monitoring devices attached to your chest and finger and may be given oxygen.

The skin near the point of insertion, usually the neck but occasionally the groin, will be swabbed with antiseptic skin preparation and you will be covered with sterile drapes.

The skin and deeper tissues over the vein will be numbed with local anesthetic.

A fine tube (catheter) will be inserted and guided, using imaging equipment into the correct position. Small amounts of dye (contrast agent) are used to check the position of the catheter.

The filter is passed through the tube to the exact site it is required and released. Small hooks grip the wall of the vein and stop it moving away.

After the procedure

Nursing staff will carry out routine observations including pulse and blood pressure and will also check the treatment site.

You will generally stay in bed for a few hours, until you have recovered, this may include an overnight stay.

If you need a magnetic resonance (MRI) scan in the future, you should tell the person doing the scan that you have a filter.

Can I drive after my procedure?

No, it is important that you have a responsible adult to escort you home. You must not drive or use public transport for the journey home.

How soon can I return to work?

This will be advised by your attending physician.

When will I get my results?

You will not know the results of your examination immediately. The radiologist will report their findings to the clinician who arranged your procedure, who will discuss the results with you. It usually takes a couple of weeks for the results to become available.

What do I do if I feel unwell after I have gone home?

You may have a small amount of bruising around the site of entry; however, if you notice any excessive bleeding you should call your GP, or go straight to the A&E department. If you experience a high temperature or fever, excessive pain, or diarrhoea you must contact your GP or the A&E department as you may have an infection which needs to be treated with antibiotics.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions about your procedure or an existing appointment, please contact the radiology nursing department (**Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm**) at **01279 82 2527 / 3405**

If you have any queries **outside of working hours (after 4pm and on weekends)**, you will be redirected to the main radiology reception.

Please note appointment bookings cannot be made during this time.

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team at paht.pals@nhs.net or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team at paht.communications@nhs.net if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.

