

Information about ...

Removing an Inferior Vena Cava Filter

Why is the Inferior Vena Cava filter being removed?

Your filter was put in place to temporarily reduce the risk of a blood clot moving to your lungs. As there is now no risk of this, we can remove the filter.

Who will do it?

A specially trained doctor called a Radiologist.

Where will it be done?

Usually in a screening room in the x-ray department.

When can I discuss the procedure?

You can discuss this with your referring consultant and also the Radiologist before the procedure.

Consent

We will ask you to sign a consent form before the procedure. Please make sure that you ask any questions you may have. When signing the form you should know what we plan to do, alternative treatments, and any risks or complication of the procedure.

What preparation is required before procedure?

You cannot eat for 6 hours before the procedure but you may drink **small** amounts of clear fluid up to 2 hours before the procedure.

You will need to undress and wear a hospital gown.

What happens during the procedure?

This is a sterile procedure however the technique used may vary but generally you will lie on your back on the x-ray table. We may give you sedatives or painkillers via a needle in your arm. We will monitor your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, oxygen intake). You may need oxygen.

The filter may have been inserted via the groin or neck but we will almost always remove it via the neck. We will clean the area over the neck with antiseptic solution and then inject a local anaesthetic. There may be some slight discomfort when we inject the local anaesthetic. This will not last long.

The radiologist will use the x-ray equipment to guide a fine plastic tube (catheter) into the vein using a needle and guide wire.

When the catheter is in the correct place, the radiologist will inject x-ray dye, called contrast medium, through the catheter. This allows the Radiologist to see the filter and assess if they can remove it. The Radiologist will check that there is no blood clot inside the filter. If the Radiologist decides to remove the filter they will insert a very fine wire with a hook into the catheter to grasp the filter. They then push the catheter forward and the filter folds inside the catheter. We then remove the catheter and will apply pressure to the puncture site to prevent any bleeding.

As the x-ray dye (contrast medium) passes round your body you may feel warm sensation which some people find a little unpleasant. This soon passes and should not concern you.

How long will it take?

This can vary for a number of reasons however expect to be in the x-ray department for about 1 to 2 hours.

What happens afterwards?

You will return to your ward and remain on bed rest for an hour. The nursing staff will monitor you and carry out routine observations (blood pressure, pulse etc). Nursing staff will also monitor the puncture site to make sure there is no bleeding. You may be able to go home on the same day, or you may have to stay overnight.

Are there any risks?

This is a safe procedure but as with any medical treatment some risks and complication can arise.

A small bruise may develop around the puncture site. However if this becomes unusually large and infected you will need antibiotics.

Very rarely some damage can be caused to the vein by the catheter and may need surgery.

In some cases temporary filters become scarred to the vein and we cannot remove them. If this is the case we will leave the filter safely in place as a permanent filter.

If you have any questions please telephone the number on your appointment card or letter.