



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# About Your Inferior Vena Cava (IVC) Filter Placement

This information will help you get ready for your inferior vena cava (IVC) filter placement by the Interventional Radiology Department at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

## About Your IVC Filter

The inferior vena cava is the largest vein in your body. It carries blood from your lower body to your heart and lungs.

A blood clot in a vein below your heart blocks your normal blood flow and may cause swelling, redness, and pain in the area. Blood clots are treated with blood thinners but some people may not be able to receive this treatment. In those cases, an IVC filter may be placed

An IVC filter is a small device that is placed in your inferior vena cava to prevent blood clots from moving through your blood into your lungs (see Figure 1).

Your IVC filter will be placed by your interventional radiologist. An interventional radiologist is a doctor who specializes in image-guided procedures. They will place the IVC filter in your inferior vena cava by going through a vein in your neck or groin. Your doctor will position the IVC filter in the vein using a fluoroscopy (real-time x-rays).

The procedure will take about 30 minutes, but you should expect to be in the procedure room for about an hour. You'll have a

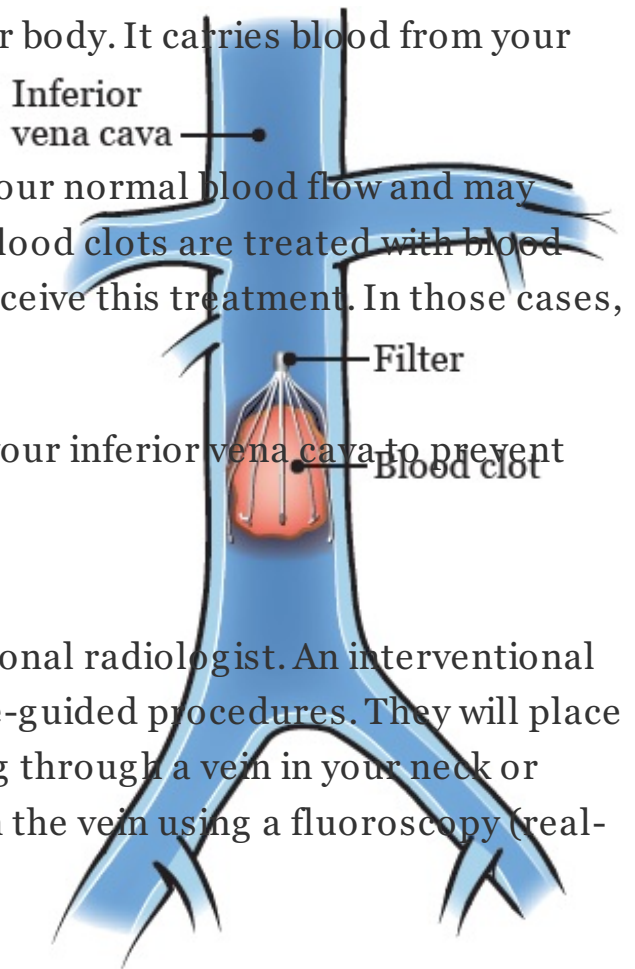


Figure 1. IVC filter

follow-up appointment 4 to 6 weeks after placement to see when your IVC filter can be removed.

## Before Your Procedure

### Ask about your medications

You may need to stop taking some of your medications before your procedure. Talk with your healthcare provider about which medications are safe for you to stop taking. We have included some common examples below.

### Blood thinners

If you take a blood thinner (medication that affects the way your blood clots), ask the healthcare provider performing your procedure what to do. Their contact information is listed at the end of this resource. Whether they recommend you stop taking the medication depends on the type of procedure you're having and the reason you're taking blood thinners.

**Don't stop taking your blood thinner medication without talking with your healthcare provider.**

Examples of Blood Thinners			
apixaban (Eliquis®)	dalteparin (Fragmin®)	meloxicam (Mobic®)	ticagrelor (Brilinta®)
aspirin	dipyridamole (Persantine®)	nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or naproxen (Aleve®)	tinzaparin (Innohep®)
celecoxib (Celebrex®)	edoxaban (Savaysa®)	pentoxifylline (Trental®)	warfarin (Jantoven®, Coumadin®)
cilostazol (Pletal®)	enoxaparin (Lovenox®)	prasugrel (Effient®)	
clopidogrel (Plavix®)	Fondaparinux (Arixtra®)	rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)	
dabigatran	heparin (shot	sulfasalazine (Azulfidine®),	

Read our resource *Common Medications Containing Aspirin, Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), or Vitamin E*

([www.mskcc.org/pe/common\\_meds](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds)). It has important information about medications you'll need to avoid before your procedure and what medications you can take instead.

## Medications for diabetes

If you take insulin or other medications for diabetes, ask the healthcare provider who prescribes your medication what you should do the morning of your procedure. You may need to change the dose before your procedure. Your healthcare providers will be checking your blood sugar level during your procedure.

## Diuretics (water pills)

If you take any diuretics (medications that make you urinate more often), ask the healthcare provider performing your procedure what to do. You may need to stop taking them the day of your procedure. Diuretics are sometimes called water pills. Some examples are furosemide (Lasix®) and hydrochlorothiazide.

## Contrast dye

Contrast is a special dye that makes it easier for your doctor to see differences in your internal organs. This procedure is usually done with contrast. If you've had a reaction to contrast in the past, tell your healthcare provider.

If you're breastfeeding, you may choose to continue after your procedure with contrast. If you have questions or would like to discuss contrast and breastfeeding, talk with your radiologist on the day of your procedure.

## Remove devices from your skin

If you wear any of the following devices on your skin, the manufacturer recommends you remove it before your scan or procedure:

- Continuous glucose monitor (CGM)

- Insulin pump

Talk with your healthcare provider about scheduling your appointment closer to the date you need to change your device. Make sure you have an extra device with you to put on after your scan or procedure.

If you're not sure how to manage your glucose while your device is off, talk with the healthcare provider who manages your diabetes care before your appointment.

## **Arrange for someone to take you home**

You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. A responsible care partner is someone who can help you get home safely and report concerns to your healthcare providers, if needed. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don't have a responsible care partner to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They'll send someone to go home with you. There's usually a charge for this service, and you'll need to provide transportation. It's OK to use a taxi or car service, but you must still have a responsible care partner with you.

### **Agencies in New York**

Partners in Care: 888-735-8913

Caring People: 877-227-4649

### **Agencies in New Jersey**

Caring People: 877-227-4649

## **Tell us if you're sick**

If you get sick (such as have a fever, cold, sore throat, or the flu) before your procedure, call your doctor in Interventional Radiology. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000 and ask for the Interventional Radiology fellow on call.

## Note the time of your appointment

A staff member from Interventional Radiology will call you 2 business days (Monday through Friday) before your procedure. If your procedure is scheduled on a Monday, they'll call you on the Thursday before. If you don't get a call by 12:00 PM the business day before your procedure, call 646-677-7001.

The staff member will tell you what time to arrive at the hospital for your procedure. They'll also remind you where to go.

**Use this area to write down the date, time, and location of your procedure:**

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If you need to cancel your procedure for any reason, call the healthcare provider who scheduled it for you.

## The Day Before Your Procedure

### Instructions for eating before your procedure



**Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your procedure.** This includes hard candy and gum.

## The Day of Your Procedure

### Instructions for drinking before your procedure



You can drink a total of 12 ounces of water between midnight and 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time. Do not drink anything else.

**Do not drink anything starting 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time.** This includes water.

## Things to remember

- Take only the medications your doctor told you to take the morning of your procedure. Take them with a few sips of water.
- Don't apply cream or petroleum jelly (Vaseline®). You can use deodorant and moisturizers. Don't wear eye make-up.
- Remove any jewelry, including body piercings.
- Leave all valuables, such as credit cards and jewelry, at home.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead, if possible. If you don't have glasses, please bring a case for your contacts.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.

## What to bring with you

- A list of the medications you take at home.
- Medications for breathing problems (such as inhalers), and medications for chest pain, if you take any.
- A case for your glasses or contacts.
- Your Health Care Proxy form, if you have completed one.
- If you use a CPAP or BiPAP machine to sleep at night, please bring your machine with you, if possible. If you can't bring your machine with you, we will give you one to use while you're in the hospital..
- A small pillow or towel to make you feel more comfortable on your way home from the hospital.

# What to expect

Once you arrive, doctors, nurses, and other staff members will ask you to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. People with the same or similar names may be having procedures on the same day.

After changing into a hospital gown, you'll meet your nurse. They will place an intravenous (IV) catheter into a vein, usually in your hand or arm. At first, you'll receive fluids through the IV, but it will be used later to give you medication to make you sleepy and more relaxed during your procedure.

Your doctor will explain the procedure, and answer any questions you have. They will also ask you to sign a consent form (a form that says you agree to the procedure and understand the risks).

You'll be brought into the procedure room and helped onto the table. You'll lie flat on your back. The skin around your insertion site (your neck or groin) will be cleaned and covered with a drape. You'll get an injection (shot) to numb the site. Your interventional radiologist will place the IVC filter through a small incision (surgical cut) made in your insertion site.

When the procedure is finished, the site will be cleaned and covered with a bandage.

## After Your Procedure

### In the recovery room

You'll be taken to the recovery room or hospital bed. Your nurse will explain your discharge instructions to you and your caregiver before you go home. They'll also give you a wallet card with information about your IVC filter to keep with you.

Wearing a seatbelt may put pressure on your incisions. You may want to place small pillow or folded towel between the strap and your body when you go home.

# At home

## Caring for yourself

- Leave the bandage on the insertion site for 24 hours. After 24 hours, you can take it off.
- Your incision may feel sore. This should get better within a day or 2. You can take over-the-counter pain medication, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®), if you need it.
- You can shower 24 hours after your procedure.

## Activities

- For the first few days, you should avoid certain activities, such as exercises that involve stretching.
- You can still have a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) while you have an IVC filter, but it's important to tell the healthcare provider at the radiology facility each time to be safe. Show them the wallet card your nurse gave to you.
- Your IVC filter won't set off metal detectors.

## Follow-Up Appointment

- You'll have a follow-up appointment with your interventional radiologist about 4 to 6 weeks after your procedure. During this appointment, your doctor will determine whether your IVC filter will be removed.
- After your procedure, call your doctor in Interventional Radiology to schedule an appointment.

## When to Call Your Healthcare Provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have any of the following:

- A fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher
- Pain around your insertion site that doesn't go away after taking medication



- Drainage around the incision site
- Redness and swelling around your insertion site

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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