

Inferior Vena Cava Filter (IVC Filter)

What is an IVC Filter?

An **inferior vena cava filter** is a type of vascular filter, a medical device that is implanted by an interventional radiologist, that will place an umbrella shaped filter in your inferior vena cava, the large vein which returns blood from the lower half of the body to the heart. Blood clots that develop in the legs or pelvis, also known as **Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)**, occasionally will break apart and travel to the lungs, but this is prevented by an IVC filter.

The filter may be placed permanently, however, it can also be placed on a temporary basis to be removed by your doctor, when the risk of a blood clot traveling from your legs to your lungs reduces.

Why do I need an IVC Filter?

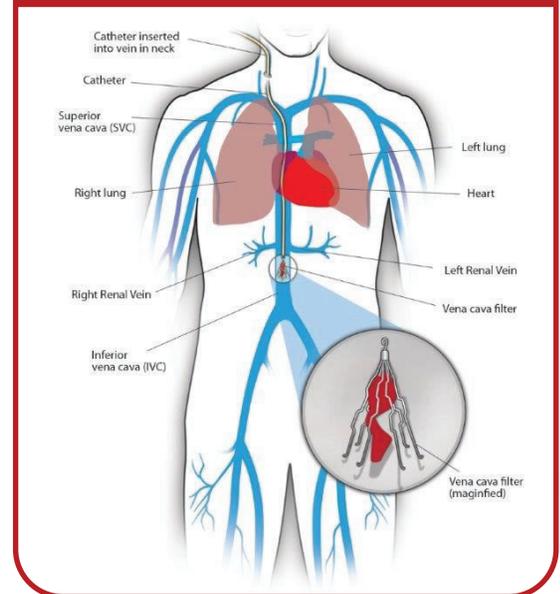
The placement of an IVC filter is usually meant for people that cannot take blood thinners and are especially prone to **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)** or **Pulmonary Embolism (PE)**. In addition, an IVC filter may be placed in patients:

- With current pulmonary embolism
- With current DVT
- Who are trauma victims
- Who are immobile

How is the Procedure Performed?

- **You will be given a mild sedative** to keep you relaxed throughout the procedure.
- **The incision site will be sterilized and the area will be injected with a numbing medication**
- **A small incision is made** and a catheter is inserted into the specified blood vessel, before being guided into the inferior vena cava, under x-ray guidance.
- **The IVC Filter is placed** in the IVC. After proper placement of the IVF is confirmed, the catheter is then withdrawn from the IVC and removed from your body,.
- **After the catheter is removed pressure is held** on the incision to prevent any bleeding. In some cases a closure device is used instead of manual held pressure over the site. A dressing will be placed over the incision site before you leave.
- **You will then be taken to the recovery area**, where you will wait until the doctor clears you to be taken home by your designated ride.
- The procedure should take around *1 hour* to complete

A tunneled catheter allows for long term venous access in patients who need regular blood stream access



What do I Need to do Before My Procedure?

You will be given detailed pre-procedural instructions by your healthcare team, including that you should:

- **Arrange for time off of work or school.** You can return to work when your doctor tells you, which is usually around a week after the procedure.
- **Tell your doctor about all medications that you are taking and follow all instructions on when to stop eating and drinking, before the procedure.**
 - This includes over-the-counter medications, patches, vitamins, and/or herbal remedies.
- **Follow your doctor's directions about medications.** You may be asked to stop taking certain blood thinners before the procedure.
- **Arrange for a ride.** You will need someone to drive you to and from the office.

What if my IVC Filter needs to be Removed?

In some cases your doctor will recommend that the IVC filter be removed. This occurs in cases where you are able to take blood thinning medications, or if you are no longer considered at high risk for a **PE**.

The filter will sometimes be left permanently if you're unable to take blood thinners, or if the filter has been in place for a long time. **This procedure is performed in a similar fashion that the filter was placed:**

- Usually a catheter is inserted into the neck or groin.
- Specialized x-ray guidance is used to thread the catheter into the IVC.
- The filter is collapsed in the IVC before being extracted through the incision in your neck.
- Pressure or a closure device is used to prevent bleeding, dressing will be applied, and you will be taken home.

How do I Care for Myself at Home?

- **If the filter was inserted through your neck:**
 - You should be able to resume normal activities within 24 hours .
- **If the filter was inserted through your groin:**
 - Avoid driving for 24 hours.
 - Avoid lifting heavy objects or climbing stairs for 48 hours.
- **Take all medications as prescribed by your doctor**
- **The incision site may feel sore,** this should improve within 1-2 days after the procedure.
- **Wait to shower for at least 24 hours** following the procedure.

Contact your doctor if you experience the following:

- Call your doctor if you have a fever over 100.4° F or greater for no known reason, or if you have:
- Pain at the incision site that is not relieved with medication
- Drainage at the incision site
- Swelling or pain
- Warmth to touch

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions regarding your filter