

## VTE CLINIC

### VENA CAVA (VC) FILTER REMOVAL

#### PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

##### **What is vena cava (VC) filter removal?**

Modern VC filters may be safely left in place permanently but can be taken out of the body in some people. This procedure is called a VC filter removal.

##### **How is my VC filter removed?**

VC filters have a small hook at one end. A catheter (a long, thin, hollow [plastic tube](#)) is inserted into a large vein in the neck or groin and used to grab the hook. The filter is then closed like an umbrella and removed from the body with the catheter.

##### **Before my VC filter removal**

An appointment will be made for you to attend for VC filter removal. Ahead of this, you will be asked to attend a pre-assessment appointment at the Norfolk Centre for Interventional Radiology (NCIR). Routine blood tests and an MRSA swab will be taken (please let the doctor know if you have ever had a positive MRSA swab before). If you are taking anticoagulants (blood thinners), advice will be given at this time. In most cases, the procedure can go ahead as normal without your anticoagulant being stopped or the dose adjusted.

##### **What will happen on the day of my VC filter removal?**

You will be given a specific time to attend NCIR on the day of the removal. You can eat and drink as normal. If you are taking Warfarin you may be required to go to the VTE Clinic (Level 2, East Block) for an INR check before you attend NCIR. Upon arrival to NCIR, you will be allocated a bed and you will be asked to change into a gown. You may be asked to remove jewellery and glasses before the procedure.

##### **How is the procedure performed?**

The procedure usually takes less than one hour. You will lie down on a bed or trolley and may be connected to a monitor. If required, you may also have a small plastic tube (cannula) inserted into a vein in your hand or arm in case sedation needs to be administered.

The area of your body where the catheter is to be inserted (neck or groin) will be sterilized and covered with a drape. The doctor will numb the skin with local anaesthetic. A small cut will be made [in the skin and the catheter](#) is inserted into the vein. Liquid which shows up on x-ray (contrast) will be used to help guide the catheter. After the procedure, the catheter will be removed and pressure applied for a short time to stop bleeding. The wound will be covered with a dressing and the cannula taken out of your hand or arm.

##### **What will I experience during and after the procedure?**

You will feel a sensation similar to a bee sting when the local anaesthetic is injected. If sedation is used, the sedative will make you feel relaxed and sleepy. You may feel slight pressure when the catheter is inserted. As the [contrast is injected](#) you may get a warm feeling.



### **What happens after my vena cava filter has been removed?**

Following the procedure, you will remain in NCIR for observation. Checks such as pulse and blood pressure will be carried out and the wound will also be checked to make sure there is no bleeding from it. You will usually be allowed home after about four hours.

### **Going home**

Please plan to have a relative or friend drive you home after your procedure. If your VC filter was removed through a vein in your neck, you should be able to resume your normal activities within 24 hours. If your filter was removed through a vein in your groin, you should avoid driving for at least 24 hours and avoid lifting heavy objects and climbing stairs for 48 hours.

If you are on warfarin, please arrange for a repeat INR to be taken at your GP Practice a couple of days after discharge from hospital.

### **How to contact us**

- If you have any other questions please contact us on **01603 286690**
- In the event of emergency please contact your GP or call 999