

The procedure is performed under sterile conditions. The skin near the point of insertion, usually the neck, will be swabbed with antiseptic and you will be covered with sterile drapes. The skin and deeper tissues over the vein will be numbed with numbing agent. A fine tube (catheter) will be inserted and guided, using the X-ray equipment into the correct position to remove the filter.

How long will it take?

Every patient is different, and it is not always easy to predict; however, expect to be in the radiology department for about an hour.

What happens afterwards?

You will be taken back to the H&H Assessment Unit. Nursing staff will carry out routine observations including pulse and blood pressure and will also check the treatment site. You will generally stay on a stretcher for approximately 3 hours. Once you are deemed medically fit you will be able to go home accompanied by a friend or relative. You should take it easy for the rest of the day but you can resume normal activities the next day. Driving, exercise lifting or strenuous activity is not permitted for 24 hours following the procedure.

Wound care:

It will be necessary to keep the puncture site covered with a band aid for 3 days after the procedure. If the area becomes red, swollen or sore you should contact the H&H Assessment Unit as may require a review.

Before leaving HHAU please make sure that you attend the reception for a follow up appointment date and time.

Contact Details:

H&H Assessment Unit (HHAU),
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Phone: +353 (01) 4103129

Mail:

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NCC

National Coagulation Centre

St James's Hospital, Dublin 8, Ireland
(01) 416 2141 / (01) 416 2142

Inferior Vena Cava (IVC) Filter Removal

**Patient
Information
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 did I have an IVC filter inserted?

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 travel to the lungs. This is called pulmonary embolism (PE). This is a serious condition which can be fatal in a small number of patients. An IVC filter prevents a large PE by trapping a clot before it reaches the lungs.

When should the IVC filter be removed?

Some IVC filters are permanent and are not removed otherwise, it is recommended that an IVC filter is removed as soon as possible. When your doctor feels that the filter is no longer necessary to prevent blood clots in lungs (PE) and it is safe for the filter to be removed.

Sometimes the IVC filter cannot be removed despite the attempts to.

How is the filter removed?

The IVC filter is removed in a similar process to the way in which it was placed. The procedure is done in the X-ray department; where a device will be used to remove the filter from your body through a small opening made in the vein of the neck or groin.

Are there any risks?

IVC filter removal is a safe procedure. Serious complications are very rare. There may be bruise at the needle site and very rarely there may be damage to the vein with a risk of bleeding. Sometimes, the filter cannot be removed then has to remain in place long-term.

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

Are you required to make any special preparations?

Removal of an IVC filter is usually carried out as a day case procedure. You will be asked not to eat for four hours nor drink for two hours before the procedure.

If you are on blood thinners you will be given instructions on taking your anticoagulant(blood thinner) before the procedure. You will not be able to drive or leave the hospital unattended after this procedure. You will have to arrange to be collected by someone from the HHAU unit, so please make these arrangements in advance of admission.

What happens on the morning of the IVC filter removal?

You will be admitted to the H&H Assessment Unit (HHAU) on the first floor of the Research Building by a nurse and doctor. A small cannula (thin tube) will be placed into a vein in your arm and pre procedure bloods will be taken. You will then be taken to the Interventional Radiology Unit on the ground floor.

What happens during removal of the IVC filter?

The interventional radiologist will explain the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form. For your comfort, sedation is available before and during the procedure as well. You will lie on the X-ray table, generally flat on your back. You may have monitoring devices attached to your chest and finger and may be given oxygen.