

IVC Filters

IVC Filters (Inferior Vena Cava) are used to function like a catcher's mitt to capture blood clots, but allow normal blood to pass through and avoid pulmonary embolism. If a DVT (deep vein thrombosis) or pulmonary embolism is diagnosed in a patient who cannot be anticoagulated; bleeds while anticoagulated; develops pulmonary embolism or clot progression while anticoagulated; has extremely high risk for pulmonary embolism or cannot sustain any more pulmonary embolus; then an IVC filter may be life saving.

An interventional radiologist can place an IVC filter through the internal jugular vein (the large vein in the neck) utilizing fluoroscopy "real-time" image guidance and a catheter. A catheter is guided to the inferior vena cava and the filter is pushed through the catheter to the appropriate location. Without the filter the clot could travel to the heart and lungs, causing a pulmonary embolus. IVC filters in the past were permanent devices; however newer devices are now retrievable after a period of time and the clots are properly collected.

Common Uses for IVC Filters

- Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)
- Patients with Pulmonary Embolus
- Trauma Victims
- Patients who are immobile
- Those that have recently had surgery or had a baby

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