Patent Foramen Ovale Repair

A Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO) Repair, or closure, is a procedure that’s done to close the flap in the wall of the atrial septum, also called a patent foramen ovale. During this procedure, a catheter with a closure device is inserted through the leg vein up to the heart, where the device is left to close up the flap.

What to Expect Prior to the Procedure
- You will meet with the physician to discuss your history and the procedure.
- Blood work will be done a few days prior to assure proper electrolyte balance and clotting function.
- You will be asked to provide a list of current medications and dosages. If you are taking Warfarin/Coumadin, you will likely be given a date to stop temporarily.
- Please inform nurse of any allergies to medicine, especially to IVP dye or Contrast.

What to Expect the Day of Procedure
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight.
- You will be instructed on which medications you may take with water.
- Bring a list of your current medications and dosages with you.
- Arrive at the given time; there is no need to arrive early.
- You will meet several people who will be your health care team.
- The procedure, including benefits and risks involved, will be discussed with you.

What to Expect During the Procedure
- IV medicine will be given to help you relax and keep you comfortable.
- Your blood pressure, heart rate, and oxygen level will be monitored.
- The procedure is done under sterile conditions.
- Medication will be used to numb the entry site (most likely the groin area).

HOW IT FEELS—There is some stinging and/or burning as the numbing medicine is placed.
- A small hollow tube (catheter) will be placed in the vein and directed to the heart under digital imaging guidance.

HOW IT FEELS—There is some pressure at the site. No sensations are felt in the heart.
- The PFO occluder device will then be directed through the PFO (the opening in the atrial septum). Using digital and echocardiography guidance, the device is positioned and deployed.

HOW IT FEELS—you most likely won’t feel anything.
- The procedure takes about 1 to 1.5 hours.
- The tube in your vein will be removed while pressure is held for about 20 minutes.
- After the procedure, the physician will talk with you and a family member per your request.
What to Expect After the Procedure

- You will be monitored overnight.
- You will be on bed rest for 2-4 hours after the procedure.
- While in the hospital, a chest x-ray and echocardiogram will be done to confirm proper device positioning.
- Aspirin will be prescribed for 6 months following your procedure to prevent blood clots from forming on your device.
- Clopidogrel (Plavix) may also be prescribed for 3 months after your procedure to prevent blood clots from forming on your device.
- For 6 months you will be required to take an antibiotic prior to dental cleaning or any procedures to prevent infecting the new device.

Activity Restrictions

- No heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling greater than 10 pounds for 5 days.
- After 5 days, no heavy activity that causes deep/heavy breathing for 6-8 weeks.
- No driving for 5 days.
- No tub baths, swimming, or hot tubs for 7 days.
- Most patients return to work within one week.

Common Experiences When You Are Home

- Expect tenderness or a small bump (size of a quarter) at the procedure site.
- Bruising is also common at the procedure site.
- Possible sensations in the chest: palpitations, chest discomfort, or pressure. This is very common about 2 weeks to 6 weeks post closure; usually treatment is NOT required. Prior to discharge, you will be given instructions and a person to contact with questions or concerns.

What You Should Report Immediately

If you experience any of the following symptoms call us at 585-275-0187

- Severe discomfort at the insertion site
- Bleeding at the insertion site
- Redness or signs of infection at the insertion site
- Increase in chest, arm, or jaw pain
- Shortness of breath

Contact Us for appointments at 585-275-6161.