

# PFO/ASD Closure

Patent Foramen Ovali  
(PFO)  
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## **Patent Foramen Ovali (PFO)**

## **Atrial Septal Defect (ASD)**

### **What is a PFO/ASD closure?**

- PFO/ASD closures are done in the catheterization laboratory (cath lab).
- A puncture (small hole) is made in your groin so that the doctor can put a special catheter (tube) into your vein.
- A special closure device is put through the catheter and carefully moved to the right spot in your heart. The doctor watches this process on monitors.
- When the device is in the right place, it is pushed out of the catheter. It then opens up and covers both sides of the hole in your heart.
- Over time, heart tissue will grow over the closure device making it secure and part of your heart.

**What are your questions?**  
**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

## What should I bring with me to the hospital?

- Your provincial health card and any health insurance cards.
- Personal care items, such as a housecoat (bathrobe), slippers, and a toothbrush.
- Any food items you will need, if you have special diet restrictions.
- Your personal directive, if you have one.
- All of your medicines in their labeled bottles.
- **Do not bring** any valuables or jewelry with you.



## What can I expect before and during the procedure?

- You will change into a hospital gown and housecoat.
- You will be asked to lie on a special table in the cath lab.
- A nurse will start an intravenous (IV) in your arm for fluids and medicine.
- You will be given medicine to help you relax.

- You will see a camera overhead and monitors on both sides of the table.
- A nurse will clean the skin in your groin area where the doctor will put the catheter.
- Sterile cloths or drapes will be put over your legs and stomach.
- Electrodes (sticky pads) will be put on your chest so that your heart can be monitored.
- A doctor will freeze your groin so that you don't feel the tubes and catheters being put in.
- The room will be cool. Once the catheter is in place, the lights will be dimmed so the doctors can see the monitors easily.
- The doctor will take measurements and then move the closure device into the right spot in your heart.
- When the closure device is pushed from the catheter, it will implant (root) in your heart.
- Over time, heart tissue will grow over the device, making it part of your heart.
- The procedure takes 1-2 hours, but **plan to be in the hospital for at least 6 hours. Your doctor may keep you overnight to monitor you.**

## What can I expect after the procedure?

- The catheter and tubes will be removed from your groin.
- To stop the bleeding, your doctor will put pressure on the area, or use a special type of stitch to close the hole.
- A pressure bandage will be put over the site.
- To prevent bleeding, you will need to lie flat with your leg straight for 3-4 hours.
- Nurses will check your blood pressure and groin bandage often. If you think you are bleeding (feel wet, sticky, or warm), have swelling in your groin, or feel numbness or tingling in your toes, **call your nurse right away.**
- Your groin may feel sore or tender. You can ask for pain medicine to help with this.
- You will need to drink more fluids than normal to flush the medicine from your body and to prevent dehydration (water loss). Your doctor may want you to have IV fluids for a few hours to help with this.
- You may need to stay in the hospital overnight where the nurse can monitor your pulse, blood pressure, and groin bandage.
- Before you go home, you may have an X-ray, electrocardiogram (ECG), or echocardiogram to check the position of the device.

## How do I look after myself when I go home?

- Stay away from strenuous activities (anything that makes you strain and hold your breath) and heavy lifting (more than 10 pounds) **for at least 1 month after your procedure.**
  - › Check with your doctor, as sometimes they may suggest a longer time.
- Your groin bandage can be taken off **24 hours after** your procedure.
- Look at your groin **each day** to see if there are any signs of infection such as more redness or drainage.
- You may wash your groin gently with soap and water. The nurse will give you a small bandage to put on.
- You may shower **24 hours after** your procedure. **Do not** let the water beat directly on your groin (procedure site).
- **Do not have a tub bath or swim for 4-5 days.** You want to be sure the hole in your groin is well healed.
- See your family doctor if you get a fever or chills, or you think you may have an infection.

- To prevent blood clots from forming, you will need to take medicine (such as Aspirin® and/or Plavix®) every day **for the next 6 months**.
- See your family doctor if these medicines cause uncomfortable side effects. **Do not stop taking these medicines unless your doctor tells you to.** Your doctor may be able to suggest a different medicine that suits you better.
- As a precaution against infection in your heart, you will need to take antibiotics before you have any procedure that causes bleeding (e.g. dental work, teeth cleaning, invasive tests, or surgery) **for at least 6 months**.
- Your family doctor will tell you if antibiotics are needed for longer than 6 months.

## Your device

- Your device **will not** get in the way of having an MRI and **will not** set off metal detector alarms at the airport.
- Your device **will be seen** on X-rays.
- You will be given an ID card that tells about your device. **Always carry it with you to show to healthcare providers who are treating you.**

## Important

- It is very important to go to all of your follow-up appointments.
- Call your family doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you:
  - › Get chest pain
  - › Feel short of breath
  - › Faint
  - › Have an irregular heartbeat

### Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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**Nova Scotia Health Authority**

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.