What is an IVC Filter?
An Inferior Vena Cava (IVC) Filter is a small flexible vascular filter that is designed to trap blood clots and stop them from moving through your blood stream preventing them from lodging in your lungs and causing a Pulmonary Embolus. The filter is placed into the IVC (the large vein in your abdomen which takes blood to your heart and lungs).

The procedure is performed in the main radiology department by a radiologist (specialist doctor), with the assistance of a radiographer (person who takes and processes x-ray images) and nursing staff.

What preparation is involved?
You will need to fast from food for 4 hours prior to the procedure. You are encouraged to drink clear fluids. Do not drink any alcohol or use any recreational drugs for 24 hours before your procedure.

Can I take my medication as normal?
If you are on blood thinning medication, you will need to advise the radiology nursing staff on 8275 1906 with a list of your medications and they will advise you accordingly.

Please do not stop taking any medication unless advised.
Please notify the radiology nursing staff if you are diabetic, and bring a list of all your current medications with you on the day of your procedure, including any vitamins or supplements you take.

What will happen during the procedure?
The radiologist will talk to you about what is involved in the procedure and will explain any risks involved.
You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and taken into the procedure room. You will be required to lie on your back during the procedure.
The procedure is performed under local anaesthetic. The IVC Filter will be inserted via either the femoral vein (in your groin) or the jugular vein (in your neck).
The radiologist will inject x-ray contrast (dye) into the vein and use x-ray imaging to place the IVC Filter in the correct position. The injection of the x-ray dye may cause a warm sensation for a short time, this is normal.

How long will the procedure take?
An IVC Filter Insertion usually takes about 60 minutes.
Before your procedure, please tell the radiographer if you are, or think you may be pregnant.
Are there any risks?

There is a small risk of infection. This risk is minimized by using sterile, single use equipment and skin antiseptic.

There is a risk of minor bleeding at the site of insertion therefore we observe you closely for the first hour after the procedure. We have processes in place to manage minor bleeding if this were to occur.

The examination will involve a small dose of x-ray radiation. The benefits of treating a medical condition are believed to be greater than the risks from receiving a small dose of x-ray radiation.

There is a small risk of allergic reaction to the contrast (x-ray dye). You will be asked some questions before the procedure and we ask that you tell us if you have any allergies. If you do experience an allergic reaction, such as itching or swelling of the face, it will be treated immediately with medication.

If you have had a previous contrast (x-ray dye) allergic reaction, it is important to advise the radiology staff prior to your appointment, please contact the department on 8275 1906.

There is a very minimal long term risk of the IVC filter filling with clots and causing leg swelling (this is rare and would not occur immediately). If you experience leg swelling please see your GP or emergency department immediately.

Other risks will be explained to you by the radiologists before the procedure is undertaken.

What happens after the procedure?

If you are an inpatient in the hospital, your after care will be provided by the nursing staff back on the ward.

If you are not an inpatient, you will be required to stay in the department for observation for up to 2 hours. During this time you will be required to rest in bed and the nursing staff will check your insertion site and take observations regularly. You will also be offered something to eat and drink. When the radiology staff are satisfied with your recovery you will be discharged home in the care of an adult who will need to stay with you for the next 24 hours.

You will be advised to rest and not undertake any strenuous activity for the following few days. A nurse will call you the day after your procedure to check on your progress and to answer any questions you may have.

You will have a small clear plastic dressing on your wound which you may remove the morning after your procedure.

When do I go back to see my doctor?

The doctor who arranged your IVC Filter Insertion will receive a copy of the radiologists report from your procedure. If you do not already have an appointment to see your doctor after the procedure, we advise you to organise one.

Can I drive after the procedure?

You must not drive following your procedure, please arrange for someone to drive you home. You should not drive for 24 hours following your procedure.

When is the IVC Filter removed?

Your treating doctor will decide if, and when your IVC filter needs to be removed. Sometimes it is appropriate to leave the IVC filter in place permanently.

Who can I contact if I am not sure about something or require further information?

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact our radiology nursing staff on 8275 1906 during business hours and they will assist with your questions.

Please notify your doctor, or attend an emergency department immediately if you experience any of these symptoms in the week following your procedure:

- Pain or Fever
- Swelling at the access site or lower limbs
- Redness around the access site