

# Sentara Heart Arrhythmia Center

(757) 388-8021 • (877) 210-0793

## PATIENT EDUCATION    **Pre and Post Procedure Instructions for Ablation for Atrial Fibrillation**

### **BEFORE ABLATION**

- About **One Week** before the procedure you will have a **CT Angiogram** to evaluate pulmonary vein anatomy
- **Seven (7) Days** before the procedure you will **Stop your Plavix**
- **Four (4) Days** before the procedure you will **Stop your Coumadin**
- **About two (2) days** before your procedure you will have a
- **Transesophageal echo.**
  - If the physician orders this for you, **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the TEE.**

**Lovenox injections** will be used in the absence of your Coumadin as a blood thinner until the night before your procedure. The nurse will train you on giving yourself this small injection. You'll use the Lovenox for 2-4 days before the procedure.

### **IMPORTANT!!!**

**DO NOT USE LOVENOX AFTER MIDNIGHT THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE.**

### **IMPORTANT!!!**

**The night before the procedure DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT.** You can brush your teeth or gargle, but do not drink anything.

**Continue all your medications except the Coumadin and Plavix**

### **PROCEDURE DAY**

Before the procedure an IV will be started and ECG patches will be placed on your chest. General anesthesia is used, so you will be asleep for the procedure and won't remember it.

The skin at your groin, arm or neck will be cleaned and shaved. The physician will numb one of these areas and make a small incision to allow access to the vein, where he will put a small catheter and thread it up to your heart. The doctor and nurse will be able to watch the catheter travel toward and into your heart with a camera- a type of x-ray called fluoroscopy.



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After the physician is finished with the ablation he will take out the catheter and the nurse will put pressure on the site for about 20 minutes. This reduces the risk of bleeding from that area. Once you completely wake up you'll be moved to a room. You'll be connected to a heart and blood pressure monitor and you'll be lying flat in bed for four to six hours, once again to decrease the chance of bleeding. You will be able to see your family in this room. You'll be seen by the nurse practitioner and given a follow up appointment for the arrhythmia center.

**You'll restart your Coumadin the night of the procedure.**

**Follow up with your Coumadin Clinic within the week to check your labs.** (to check an INR)

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE ABLATION

**It is expected that you may feel short episodes of AFIB for a few weeks after the procedure.** This can be from irritation to the heart and does not mean the procedure didn't work. If this happens, call the arrhythmia center.

After the procedure use a **half dose of Lovenox twice daily until your INR (lab that measures blood thinning) is within treatment range.** You'll probably be on the Lovenox for two to four days after the ablation. Then you'll stop the Lovenox and restart the Coumadin.

You'll be discharged from the hospital the day after the ablation.

You may feel sore or tired after the ablation and you may notice bruising at the catheter site. If you have any pain, swelling or numbness in the extremity where the catheter was used, call the arrhythmia center.

You should limit yourself to non strenuous activities for two days after the procedure. (No lifting more than 10 lbs)

You can take a shower the day after the procedure, a bath in 2 days time.

**You'll be seen in the Sentara Heart Arrhythmia Center at intervals to check on your heart rhythm and medications. As your heart stabilizes into a healthy rhythm, some of the medicine can be stopped.**