

# Sentara Heart Arrhythmia Center

(757) 388-8021 • (877) 210-0793

## PATIENT      **Pre and Post Left Atrial** EDUCATION    **Appendage Occlusion**

In patients with atrial fibrillation without valve disease, most of the clots form in the left atrial appendage. It makes an ideal sack for blood to pool, forming clots.

The cardiologist can do a procedure to put a device in the LAA to keep the clots from traveling to other parts of the body including the brain. The left atrial appendage occlusion is the ideal procedure for those patients who cannot or do not wish to take Coumadin.

### **BEFORE THE PROCEDURE**

You will have a **Transesophageal echocardiogram** to size the device. This can be done on an outpatient basis.

- **Four (4) Days** prior to the procedure **Stop your Coumadin.**

**Lovenox injections** will be used for anticoagulation in the absence of the Coumadin.

### **IMPORTANT!!!**

**DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT ON THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE.**

### **IMPORTANT!!!**

**DO NOT TAKE THE LOVENOX AFTER MIDNIGHT THE NIGHT BEFORE THE PROCEDURE.**

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## PROCEDURE DAY

Before the procedure an IV will be started and ECG patches will be placed on your chest. You will be given general anesthesia and will be asleep throughout the procedure. The cardiologist or anesthesiologist will do a **Transesophageal echocardiogram** to make sure there are no clots in the heart and to help confirm correct placement of the device.

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. Once in the atria, the catheter can be passed from the right side to the left atria through a small opening that is already there, (a PFO or patent foramen ovale) or the cardiologist can make a small opening to pass the catheter through.

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 about four hours, once again to decrease the chance of bleeding. You will be able to see your family in this room.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE LEFT ATRIAL APPENDAGE OCCLUSION

You'll stay in the hospital overnight, with plans to leave the following day.

**Coumadin will be resumed** for 45 days.

**A follow up Transesophageal echocardiogram** will be obtained 45 days after the device is placed to confirm closure of the left atrial appendage.

**Follow up in the Sentara Heart Arrhythmia Center in 45 days.**

