**INFERIOR VENA CAVA FILTERS**

**BACKGROUND**

You have a blood clot. This blood clot can be in the deep veins of the legs, known as a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), or in the lungs, known as a pulmonary embolism (PE).

The usual treatment for a blood clot is “blood thinners” or anticoagulants. Anticoagulants prevent new blood clots from forming and prevent the blood clot that is present from getting larger. You may not be able to receive anticoagulants because of:

- Active bleeding
- High risk of bleeding/recent surgery
- Need for surgery

**WHAT IS AN INFERIOR VENA CAVA FILTER AND WHY DO I NEED ONE?**

- An inferior vena cava (IVC) filter is a device that is used for patients who have a blood clot and are not able to receive anticoagulants to treat the blood clot. The IVC filter helps prevent blood clots in the deep veins of your leg (DVT) from travelling to the lungs and causing a PE.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN IVC FILTER?**

- The IVC filter will help prevent blood clots from travelling to your lungs. If you already have blood clots in your lung, it will help prevent more blood clots from travelling to your lungs.

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF AN IVC FILTER?**

- Although side effects are uncommon, infection or bleeding at the filter insertion site may occur. In rare cases IVC filters can break or dislodge and move. There is a small risk that a temporary filter cannot be removed and may be left in as a permanent device. There is an increased risk of DVT in the leg if the IVC filter is permanent.

**WILL MY IVC FILTER BE PERMANENT?**

- Most IVC filters are temporary. If the IVC filter is temporary, the goal is to remove the IVC filter as soon as possible; this will depend on if you are well enough to start receiving anticoagulants. A follow-up appointment with the specialist will determine if the filter can be removed.