

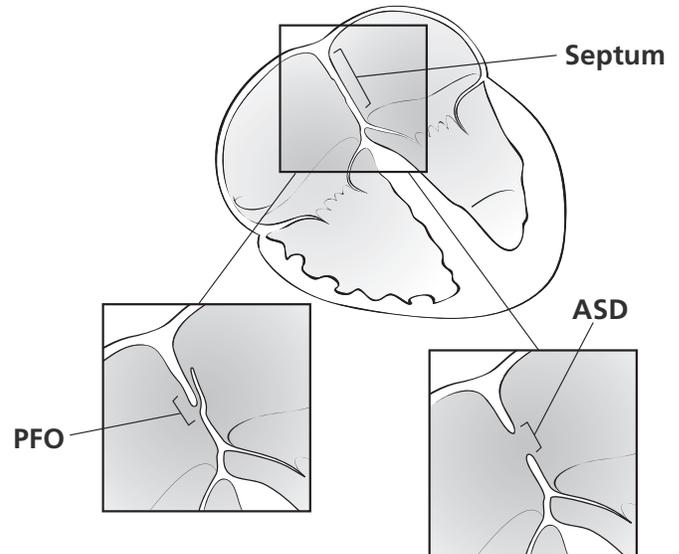
PFO and ASD Closure in the Cath Lab

Why might I need a PFO or ASD closure procedure?

Imaging studies have found an opening in your heart called a **patent foramen ovale (PFO)** or an **atrial septal defect (ASD)**. This procedure is a way to close the opening in your heart without having open heart surgery.

An ASD closure may help relieve heart rhythm problems or symptoms of congestive heart failure such as fatigue and shortness of breath, or to reduce your risk of stroke.

You might need a PFO closure if you've had a stroke that is related to the PFO.



What happens during a PFO or ASD closure procedure?

See the other side of this handout to learn more about what happens before, during, and after the procedure.

What to ask your doctor about a PFO or ASD closure procedure:

Ask your doctor:

- How this procedure may help you
- If there are any other surgeries or procedures that can help you
- What the risks are

Keep asking questions until you are sure you understand all of the benefits and risks.

What are the benefits of a PFO or ASD closure procedure?

Your heart may work better. This may ease symptoms caused by the mixing of oxygen-rich and oxygen-poor blood in your heart. This should help you breathe easier and be more active. It may also lower your risk of stroke. PFO closure has not been found to reliably reduce migraines. Also, it is not indicated unless you've had a previous TIA or stroke.

What are the risks and potential complications of a PFO or ASD closure procedure?

Major complications are uncommon. Some of the risks and potential complications are:

- Temporary leg numbness or weakness in the first few hours afterward (rare)
- Bruising, bleeding, infection, or blood vessel damage where catheter(s) were inserted
- Damage to the heart muscle that may require open heart surgery
- Abnormal heart rhythm
- Blood clots
- Heart attack or stroke
- Negative reaction to anesthetic or dye
- Unforeseen complications

What can I do instead of a PFO or ASD closure procedure?

Open heart surgery is another way to fix your PFO or ASD. It's not recommended for people with certain health problems. You may also choose to be treated with medicine only.

Before your procedure

- You will need someone to take you to the hospital on the day of your procedure and to bring you home the next day.
- You are not allowed to eat or drink anything after midnight (12:00 AM) the night before you go to the hospital.
- You should not take any medicines after midnight the night before your procedure.
- Patients with diabetes are treated at the hospital with an insulin sliding scale.

During your procedure

- The procedure takes 1 to 2 hours.
- You are given medicine to make you sleep.
- The doctor makes a small cut (incision) in your groin.
- A thin, flexible tube called a catheter is moved through the incision and up to the opening in your heart.
- A special closure device is attached to the catheter. Two general types of closure devices can be used:
 - The first device is like two wire mesh discs that cover each side of the hole like a sandwich.
 - The second device works like a tiny double umbrella. When it's in place, the umbrella springs open and covers each side of the hole. (The type of device to be used will depend on what the doctor sees during the procedure.)

- Once the catheter is in the correct position in your heart, the device is expanded to close the hole.
- The catheter is taken out and the incision in your groin is closed.

After your procedure

- You are taken to a recovery area immediately after your procedure.
- You will need to lay flat for at least 6 hours.
- You may stay overnight in the hospital.

At home

- You can expect some mild discomfort in the incision area for a few days.
- You need to take your medicines exactly as your doctor ordered to manage your pain and prevent infection.
- You may need a laxative for constipation.
- You will have a bandage on your groin for about 4 days. You will need to keep this clean and dry.
- You may not take a bath or go swimming until your doctor says it's okay.
- You may not lift anything that weighs more than a gallon of milk for several days.
- You may not do any activities that include bending or squatting for at least 1 week.
- You may do light exercise, such as walking, but no running, for at least 1 week.
- **Avoid dental work for 6 months.** Dental work — including having your teeth cleaned — increases the risk of bacterial infection in your heart. If you need emergency dental treatment, talk to your doctor and/or your dentist about taking preventive antibiotics before any procedure.

