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**neurosciencegroup**

## Your Guide to a Blood Patch

### What is a Blood Patch?

A Blood Patch is a procedure that uses your own blood help the symptoms (low pressure/positional headaches) related to the small hole in the dura mater (the tough outer layer of tissue that covers cerebrospinal fluid and the spinal cord) after a dural puncture.

### How can a Blood Patch help me?

A Blood Patch helps to clot a small hole in the dura mater that was created during a dural procedure to help treat a spinal headache.

### Will I have immediate relief after a Blood Patch?

A Blood Patch may take 4-6 hours before improvement in a headache; however, some people feel it immediately.

### How do I prepare for a Blood Patch?

Ensure your doctor knows if:

You are taking Coumadin or any other blood thinners: *Plavix, Aspirin, Eliquis, Excedrin, fish oil, etc.*

You are taking steroids and or antibiotics.

You have liver or kidney disease: *chronic kidney disease, cirrhosis, etc.*

You have the following implantable devices: *medication pump, pacemaker, defibrillator, or stimulator.*

You have any allergies: *steroids, anesthetic, iodine, adhesive, contrast, shellfish.*

You have any questions regarding your medication.

You have had or are planning to have a vaccine within 2 weeks of your procedure.

**\*\*Please call to cancel your appointment if you have a fever, the flu, covid, or any other infection\*\***

### What can I do the day of a Blood Patch?

- You may eat and drink normally; there is no need to fast.
- Take your normal medication on the day of your test, unless otherwise instructed.
- You will need to shower with antibacterial soap the day before and the day of your procedure.
- We suggest you do not plan any strenuous activity the day of your procedure.
- Do NOT apply lotions, creams, ointments, or gels the day of your procedure.
- Wear loose fitting and comfortable clothing including elastic waistband pants/shorts.
- Plan to be on bedrest the remainder of the day.
- **Bring someone with you who can remain on campus to drive you home.**

*(The length of the procedure itself is approximately 20 minutes).*

### **What can I expect during the procedure?**

You will need to be able to get yourself up onto the procedure table and position yourself on your back.

While positioned on your back the nurse will draw some blood from you.

You then will be positioned on your stomach and your back will be cleansed with an antiseptic solution.

You will remain on your stomach for the entire length of the procedure.

The physician will use fluoroscopy (x-ray) to guide the placement of the needle to the dura mater.

You may feel some pressure in the area of your injection.

The physician will inject the medication slowly in order to decrease your discomfort.

Once the blood is injected, the needle is removed, the area will be cleaned off, a band aid will be applied, and the procedure is complete.

### **What happens after a Blood Patch?**

- You will spend about 10 minutes in the recovery room reviewing post-procedure instructions with the nurse prior to discharging. You may require a longer stay in recovery if additional monitoring is necessary.
- **You will need to be bedrest the rest of the day.**
- Avoid sudden position changes, coughing, sneezing, and straining with bowel movements.
- You will NOT be able to drive or operate heavy machinery for the rest of the day after your procedure.
- You can shower after your procedure. However, NO SOAKING in tub, hot tub, pool, etc. for 24 hours.
- You may return to work the following day.

**Questions about your blood patch procedure?  
Call Heather, our Physiatry Nurse Navigator, 920-725-9373**