

## PFO/ASD Closure

### Basic Facts:

A PFO/ASD (patent foramen ovale/atrial septal defect) is a small hole between the 2 upper chambers of the heart. Normally, this hole is closed shortly after birth, but as many as 10-25% of the population still have an opening that remains into adulthood. The size of the hole can vary from very small to large. Some people do not know they have this until symptoms begin. This is important because this can lead to an increased risk in stroke. In fact, as many as up to 40% of all strokes are thought to be from a PFO/ASD.

### How is it treated, and when?

- The hole can be closed through a minimally invasive procedure that is catheter-based; not open heart surgery. The total procedure takes 1-2 hours, and there is little “down” time afterwards.
- Depending on the severity, the hole can be monitored with regular sonograms, and medications may be offered to decrease the risk of blood clots.
- Usually, the PFO/ASD is closed when you become symptomatic (have shortness of breath, breathing fast, or lower extremity swelling or irregular heart beat), and when it has been diagnostically determined (via echocardiogram) that it is the cause to the symptoms. A PFO/ASD may also be repaired after a stroke or TIA has occurred and the patient is found to have the PFO/ASD as the cause.

### What Happens After the Procedure?

- You will be started on ASA and Plavix following the procedure that will be continued for 6 months. You will also be given an antibiotic which you will take for 2 days.
- No contact sports, heavy activity or strenuous activity for one month (this includes no lifting, pushing or pulling more than 50 pounds)
- Do not operate a motor vehicle for 2 days after the procedure, but you may resume normal activities 3-4 after with the exception as above
- No elective surgery or dental work for 6 months after the procedure (NO dental work 30 days prior)

#### **When to call the office:**

- Fever, chest pain, drainage from incision site, or neurological symptoms

#### **Follow up:**

- You will be seen in the office 2 weeks after your procedure to go over details and answer any questions you may have
- You will be seen in one month following the procedure for an echocardiogram
- You will be seen three months after the procedure for a bubble echocardiogram and transcranial Doppler (TCD)
- You will have annual echocardiograms following

