

Imaging department

Mechanical thrombectomy for acute ischaemic stroke

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about **mechanical thrombectomy**, including its benefits, risks, and what to expect during the procedure.

What has happened?

You (or your relative) are being treated for a stroke. This happens when a blood vessel is blocked by a clot, cutting off the blood supply to the brain. Stroke is a medical emergency, and if left untreated, may result to long-term disability.

What is a mechanical thrombectomy?

A thrombectomy is a minimally invasive procedure which aims to remove the clot blocking the artery. This procedure is performed under X-ray guidance by a neurointerventionist, and assisted by radiology nurses and radiographers. An anaesthetist will also be present during the procedure.

For most patients, evidence strongly suggests that if thrombectomy is performed as quickly as possible, this can reduce brain damage, and prevent or limit disability.

How is a mechanical thrombectomy performed?

During the procedure, a thin long tube (catheter) will be guided through the blood vessels, usually through an artery in the groin or wrist area. A contrast dye is injected into the catheter to help the operator guide the catheter to the affected blood vessel in the brain safely.

Different devices and methods are used to remove the blood clot. The operator will attempt to remove the blood clot with a device that either sucks or traps the clot.

The procedure is performed either under local anaesthetic with sedation, or under general anaesthetic.

Risks of the mechanical thrombectomy procedure

Risks of the procedure include the following:

- bleeding, swelling or bruising from the puncture, either from the groin or the wrist
- bleeding in the brain
- small risk of damage to the artery
- very small risk of infection. The procedure is performed under sterile conditions
- worsening of stroke, or failure to improve
- adverse reaction to injected contrast medium
- failure to remove the blood clot
- rare risk of death

There are some cases where we may need to deploy a stent during the procedure if we fail to reopen the occluded blood vessel.

Obtaining consent to proceed with a mechanical thrombectomy

It is important that you are involved in decisions about your care. Before we can go ahead with the procedure, we will explain to you why we think you need the procedure, as well as the benefits and the risks.

If you are too unwell and unable to consent, the procedure will be carried out with your best interests, following an agreement with the rest of the medical team. We will involve your relatives in the discussion of the treatment plan.

What to expect after mechanical thrombectomy

Patients who are recovering from a thrombectomy procedure are usually transferred to the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit (HASU).

Alternatively, depending on your condition after the procedure, you may be transferred to Intensive Care Unit (ICU), where medical and nursing teams will continuously care for you and will closely monitor you. You will be on bed rest for at least 6 hours to allow the tiny puncture site to heal.

If suitable, you may be transferred back to your local hospital as soon as safe and practicable.

How long will I stay in the hospital?

No two people are affected by stroke in the same way, and recovery from stroke depends on many factors. This may include the location and severity of the stroke, your age, and your medical history.

If you are not a local patient to Charing Cross Hospital, you will be transferred to your local stroke unit as soon as it is safe to do so. Your local hospital will receive a handover from our stroke team, including rehabilitation and follow-up plans.

Contact details

Please do not hesitate to contact our departments if you have any queries or concerns about the procedure:

- **Interventional Radiology**
1 North
Charing Cross Hospital
Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF
Telephone: 020 3313 0770
- **Hyper Acute Stroke Unit**
9 North
Charing Cross Hospital
Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF
Telephone: 020 3313 3856

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf. Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

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