Before and After Embolization

Embolization of the blood vessels in the brain is done by our neuroendovasular team. You may need this procedure to treat a brain aneurysm or an arterial-venous malformation (AVM), or dural arteriovenous fistula (dAVF). It can also be used with open neurosurgery or stereotactic radiosurgery to repair an AVM.

The doctor will use special equipment to see the blood vessels and will insert a small catheter through to the blood vessel. The doctor will then inject small soft metal coils, a liquid embolic material or solid particle into the aneurysm or blood vessel to "block off" blood flow to the aneurysm or problem area.

What is embolized depends on the size, location, symptoms, hemodynamics, and anatomic vasculature of the area to be treated.

Before Surgery

- We will give you a pre-op folder with information about your surgery.
- You will need a pre-op physical and lab work within 30 days of surgery.
- Our staff will call you to schedule surgery and tell you how to get ready.
- Tell your doctor about any recent illness.
- Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including herbal supplements.
- List any allergies to medicines, metals, food, anesthesia or iodinated contrast media.
- Your doctor may tell you to stop taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
- **Do not stop taking blood thinning medicines unless told to do so.** Our team or the ordering provider will tell you how to safely stop your medicines.
- Tell the doctor if you are pregnant.

After Surgery

Plan to stay in our Neuro ICU for 1-2 nights.

Pain

You may feel more pressure in your head or have a headache. We can order pain medicine for you if this occurs.

Activity

You will be asked to get out of bed the day of surgery or the day after. We will have you increase your activity slowly. Walking is the best exercise.

Diet

You will start with clear liquids and then return to your normal diet slowly.

Going Home

Activity

You will need to take things a little easy for a while. Slowly work back into your routine, always within the guidelines set by your doctor. You can return to your routines when you feel better. How much you can do depends on your level of comfort and fatigue.

Driving

If your vision is normal, you are not taking narcotic medicines, you may drive, unless the doctor has told you not to.

Work
Your return to work will be discussed at the first clinic visit. The amount of time off work varies from 2-4 weeks.

Sex
This will depend upon your doctor's advice.

Bathing
- **Do not** soak in water for the next week.
- You may shower and gently wash the puncture site with mild soap and water. **Do not** rub. Blot with a towel to dry.
- You may remove the bandage over your groin site when you shower.
- You may resume your normal bathing habits after 1 week.

Activity Restrictions
Until you see your doctor, avoid:
- Contact sports
- Weightlifting
- Hard exercise, walking is ok.
- Lifting more than 10 pounds.
- Stooping or bending over (squat if you need to pick things up.
- Straining
- Things that may raise your blood pressure.
- Constipation
- Avoid all tobacco products and second-hand smoke.

Diet
Increase your fiber and water intake to prevent constipation. Try to drink at least 8 glasses of water per day.

Constipation
Constipation can cause you to strain during bowel movements. Along with increasing fiber and water in your diet, try staying active. Walking is the best way to stay active while following your activity restrictions. If you have problems, you can get stool softeners at the pharmacy. **Do not** use suppositories or enemas.

When to Call
- Feeling dizzy.
- Severe or increased headaches.
- Vision changes.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Feeling sleepy for long periods.
- Change in behavior.
- Problems with walking or balance.
- Constipation not relieved by stool softeners and increased fiber and water.
- Fever over 100.5 for 24 hours.
- Any signs of wound infection including redness, swelling or drainage.

Who to Call
If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan.

For a list of UW Health Clinics, please visit www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#4453.