

Clot Retrieval for Stroke: Information for Patients and Families

When a person has had a stroke caused by a blockage of blood flow to the brain, this type of stroke is called an ischemic stroke. Some of the treatments that may be considered include:

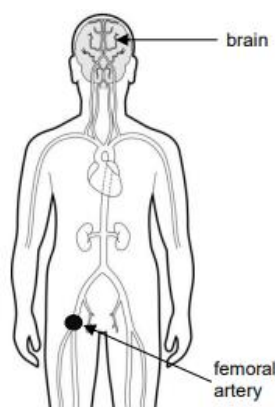
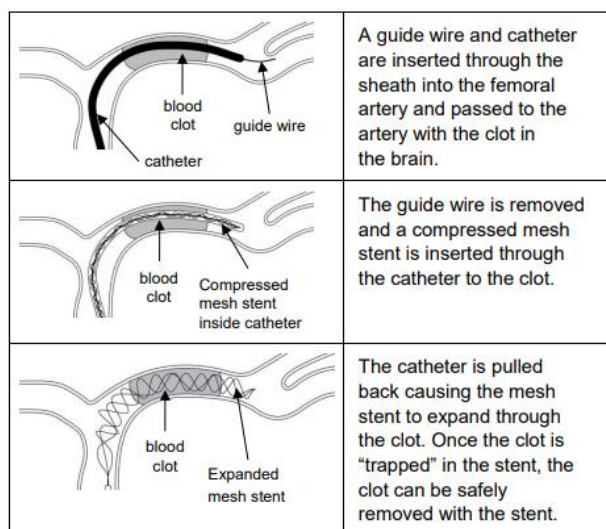
- A type of medication called a 'thrombolytic'. This medication helps to dissolve or break down the clot and restore blood flow to the brain. It is given intravenously (IV), through a thin tube that is inserted into a vein in the arm. Some patients are not eligible to receive this medicine because of medical conditions or other medicines taken.
- Mechanical Thrombectomy – a procedure to remove the blood clot. To determine if a patient is eligible for this procedure, the patient will have special imaging called a CTA (computed tomography angiogram) to look at blood vessels and blood flow in the brain.

Preparing for the thrombectomy

- The patient will be taken to a Neuro-Interventional Radiology Suite. The suite is located on the 2nd floor at London Health Sciences University Hospital and on the 1st floor at Windsor Regional Hospital Ouellette Campus. The patient may have other imaging tests done when they arrive before the procedure is started.
- The doctor doing the procedure will speak to the patient and/or Power of Attorney, or Substitute Decision Maker. The doctor will answer any questions and ask for consent for the procedure.
- During the procedure the family can wait in the waiting area.

During the procedure

- The Neuro-Interventional Health Care team consists of doctors, nurses and technologists.
- The patient may have a urinary catheter put in place.
- The hair in the groin area may be shaved.
- Blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and comfort level will be continuously monitored.
- The patient may receive medication through the intravenous (IV) line which will help to relax them and make them feel comfortable.
- The procedure takes about 1 to 2 hours.
- A small bandage will be placed on the groin puncture site at the end of the procedure.



A small thin tube, called a sheath, is inserted in the femoral artery in the groin area.

After the procedure

- The patient will be moved to an intensive care unit where they will be closely monitored. The hyperacute stroke unit at London Health Sciences Centre University Hospital is located on the 7th floor. The critical care unit at Windsor Regional Hospital Ouellette Campus is located on the 3rd floor.
- A limited number of visitors may be permitted. Please speak with the nursing staff about visiting.
- The doctor will provide an update to the family.
- The patient may not be able to eat or drink after the procedure. They will have an intravenous (IV) line for hydration.
- The patient will need to lie flat and keep the leg with the groin puncture straight for 2 to 4 hours.
- The patient may do the following for comfort:
 - Turn from side to side with help while keep the leg straight
 - Wiggle their toes
 - Bend the leg that was **NOT** punctured in the groin
 - Have the head of their bed raised slightly
 - Have pain medication if needed
- After the procedure the patient's:
 - Blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, comfort level, and neurological status will be monitored.
 - Groin area will be monitored for bleeding and swelling.
 - Legs and feet will be monitored for blood flow and circulation.

Tell the nurse right away if you notice warmth or dampness or bleeding around the bandage in the groin.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your health care team.
Clot retrieval is performed at two capable centres within Southwestern Ontario:

London Health Sciences Centre – University Hospital

Contact the Hyperacute Stroke Unit at (519) 685-8500

Windsor Regional Hospital – Ouellette Campus

Contact the Critical Care Unit at (519) 254-5577