Ovarian Vein Venography and Embolization

Your doctor is concerned that you may be suffering from a syndrome called "chronic pelvic congestion" or "ovarian vein congestion syndrome'.

Individuals who suffer from this syndrome have pelvic pain that may be associated with standing, intercourse, menstrual cycle, and vaginal dilated veins. Most women who develop this syndrome have delivered children and it is thought that the veins draining the ovaries are affected by pregnancy causing them to enlarge and become tortuous and distended with blood. After pregnancy in some individuals the veins do not shrink in size but remain enlarged contributing to the "pelvic congestion syndrome".

The initial component of this procedure involves the insertion of a small plastic catheter into the large vein in the groin. This catheter insertion is performed with the assistance of local anesthetic (freezing) and after the area has been prepared with a sterile solution and application of sterile drapes. This small plastic catheter is then manipulated into the veins that drain blood away from the ovaries and x-ray "dye" (contrast) is injected into the veins to determine if they are enlarged and abnormal.

If the veins are enlarged and tortuous we suggest blocking them (embolization) by injecting small metallic coils into the veins through the small plastic catheter in the ovarian vein.

You must stay in Saskatoon the evening following your procedure, within a 15-minute drive of hospital Emergency Department. Please be aware that City Hospital Emergency Department closes at 8:30 pm. If all is well you may return home the next day.

The risks of ovarian vein venography and embolization include the following:

1. Bleeding at the catheter insertion site in the groin - This is rare due to the slow flow and low blood pressure in the veins in this region. We will not discharge you from the procedure room unless we are confident that there is no evidence of active bleeding.

2. Discomfort - The implantation of the embolization coils may cause minor flank and back discomfort that is easily managed with simple pain relievers taken by mouth. If your discomfort is difficult to tolerate the nurses in the Day Surgery area will contact us to prescribe stronger pain relief medications.

3. Displacement of the embolization coils - Very rarely one of the metallic coils implanted in the ovarian vein breaks free and enters the central veins of the body. The blood flow in these veins will result in this coil entering the veins of the lungs and becoming lodged in this area. This is called a pulmonary embolism. This happens very rarely.