

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

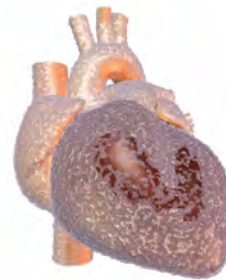
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## What is a Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO)?

What is a Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO)? Sounds like something from outer space right? A PFO is a tunnel like structure in the septal wall between the top two chambers of the heart. During pregnancy the Foramen Ovale is necessary to allow oxygenated blood from the placenta to the fetus. When the baby is born, the PFO closes in 75-85 percent of the population. In the remaining 15- 25 percent, the PFO may or may not cause problems. There is a strong association between PFO's and a cryptogenic stroke. A cryptogenic stroke just means a stroke from an unknown etiology. In younger individuals who have a cryptogenic stroke, somewhere between 36-54 percent of them will have a PFO. As we get older, the risk of strokes increase and so do the number of causes.



While older patients can still have a stroke from a PFO, there are many other likely culprits as well such as carotid artery stenosis, atrial fibrillation, and atherosclerosis just to name a few. Even if a PFO is found, other causes have to be ruled out first. If there is no other etiology of the stroke, then a treatment must be decided on. A PFO is found during an ultrasound of the heart called an echocardiogram. Sometimes a transesophageal echocardiogram is done if better images are needed.

A transesophageal echocardiogram or TEE involves placing a small probe down the food pipe (esophagus) to get a better look at the heart. Not all abnormalities can be seen on a regular echocardiogram due to other body structures. Treatment many times is based on the echocardiogram or TEE findings. Based on the current literature, strokes are reported at a higher incidence in people who have an aneurysmal septum. These individuals may be treated more aggressively. The other finding that would warrant a more aggressive treatment would be a venous blood clot, also known as a DVT. The general thought is that a stroke is caused by a DVT from the pelvis or lower extremities. The clot travels up to the heart and passes thru the PFO into the left side of the heart. From here, it is allowed to travel up to the brain and cause a stroke or mini stroke. If a DVT is present, anticoagulation with warfarin is recommended for at least 3 months. (1,2,3).

### Tip of the Month

#### Heart Healthy Foods

1. Blueberries, Strawberries, Raspberries, Red grapes.
2. Fish (Salmon, Tuna, Mackerel).
3. Soybeans, Tofu, Soybean Oil
4. Whole grains (Bread, Cereals, Oatmeal).
5. Nuts (Almonds, Walnuts, Pecans).
6. Olive Oil
7. Other Fruits and Vegetables (Broccoli, Spinach, Bananas etc.).
8. Beans (Pintos, Garbanzos, Chickpeas, Kidney beans, and Lentils).
9. Teas (Green, Black-watch the caffeine intake though) (4).



# Slow Cooker Chili



Recipe obtained from  
"Breaking the Salt  
Habit" by Erik Williams

## Ingredients:

2 lb extra lean ground turkey  
2-8 oz. cans NSA tomato sauce  
2-14.5 oz. cans kidney beans  
2-14.5 oz. cans pinto beans  
1 cup onion, chopped  
1-4 oz. can green chiles  
1\2 cup celery, chopped  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
2-14.5 oz. cans NSA diced tomatoes  
2 1\2 tsp cumin  
2-3 Tb chili powder

1 tsp black pepper  
1 tsp oregano  
1 tsp paprika  
1 tsp sugar

## Directions:

1. Brown ground turkey in skillet.
2. Add all ingredients to slow cooker.
3. Let cook for 8-9 hours on low.

Tips: A no sodium chili powder can be found in some stores. Rinse beans to lower sodium content.

## Health Information

Serving size: 1 cup  
Servings: 8  
Calories: 360  
Total Fat: 8 g  
Sat Fat 3 g  
Sodium 377 mg  
Cholesterol 80 mg  
Carbs 42 g  
Protein 34 g  
Sugars 8 g  
Fiber 11 g  
Potassium 102 mg

**Quote of the Month:** "I find the harder I work, the more luck I seemed to have" Thomas Jefferson.

## **Bible Verse of the Month:**

"Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield" Psalm 33:20.

## **Did you Know?**



Did you know that fast food generally equals high sodium. In many cases, high calories and high fat as well. For example, at McDonald's a Honey Mustard Snack Wrap (grilled) has 650mg of sodium. A Big Breakfast with Hotcakes has a whopping 2150mg of sodium. The favorite Big Mac comes in at 960mg of sodium. Remember this does not count the drink or French fries. Let's not just pick on McDonald's. The Chopped Farmhouse Crispy Chicken Salad from Arby's has 1020mg of sodium, not to mention 23g of fat. So much for being healthy with a salad. The traditional Roast Beef Classic carries 970mg of sodium. If you add a medium order of curly fries, that is an additional 26g of fat and 1200mg of sodium. Ok, so now what. What are some low sodium, low fat fast food options?

If you must, the McDonald's Fruit n Yogurt Parfait weighs in at only 150 calories with 80mg of sodium. The Premium Southwest Salad is a good option as well. Another good options is Subway for calories and fat, but the sandwiches are still higher in the sodium category. The lowest 6 inch sub available is the Veggie Delite and comes in at 280mg of sodium. To stay below the 600mg mark, a Turkey, Roast Beef, or Black Forest Ham Mini Sub must be ordered. Remember the packaged apples and bottled water will also help keep the meal healthy. From Wendy's a 4-Piece Chicken Nugget has 180 calories and 350mg of sodium. A Caesar side salad weighs in at 60 calories and 70mg of sodium. Fast food is not a great option for food but sometimes it is a necessity. Make sure to read the Nutritional information and stay healthy! (5,6,7,8).

So who gets what treatment? The jury is still out for most. Evidence is generally lacking on this topic. As far as medication, generally the recommendation is aspirin or warfarin (Coumadin). PFOs can also be closed with either open heart surgery or via a catheter based approach with a closure device. Given that there is a catheter based closure method, surgery is usually reserved for individuals undergoing open heart surgery for another reason. According to the most recent stroke guidelines, there is not enough evidence to support warfarin over aspirin in someone who has had a stroke with a PFO with no evident blood clot. One of the two is recommended and this decision is left to the discretion of the medical provider. In this individual, a closure device is not strongly supported according to current guidelines. However, some individuals choose to have their PFO closed instead of medical therapy. In individuals that have an evident blood clot, warfarin is recommended. If it is contraindicated, then an Inferior Vena Cava (IVC) filter can be placed. This filter catches blood clots from the pelvis or lower extremities before they get to the heart. In this individual, a PFO closure may be considered if there is risk of recurrent blood clot.

To sum up, it seems that research might not be caught up with technology. At this point, there are multiple treatment approaches that have to be individualized. However, it is an exciting field and a growing field. As more closure devices are tested and more experience is obtained, the current recommendations may also change. For now, just seek treatment if you have any signs or symptoms of a stroke or mini stroke. (2,3).