Frequently Asked Questions:

How long does the procedure take?
Typically, the procedure takes between three to five hours.

How often will I require treatment?
In order to maintain lowest possible LDL levels over time, patients will typically require treatment once every 2 weeks.

How will LDL Apheresis help me?
Studies have shown that LDL Apheresis can lower LDL cholesterol approximately 70 to 83% after a single treatment. They have also shown that lowering the LDL cholesterol is associated with fewer cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and stroke.

How do I make an appointment?
You can call our department at 619-543-5977, or email us at apheresis@ucsd.edu

Special Instructions:
For the two days before treatment drink plenty of fluids. On the day of treatment, for three hours before the procedure, drink as little as possible. Visit the restroom immediately before the procedure.

Apheresis Program
200 W. Arbor Drive,
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Phone: 619-543-5977
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Website:
http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/apheresis/
Pages/default.aspx

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Additional patient information and educational video are available on the Liposorber website: http://www.liposorber.com/patient/index.htm
What is Familial Hypercholesterolemia (FH)?
Certain people with high cholesterol have an inherited genetic condition called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH). If untreated, 50% of FH patients can experience cardiac and vascular illness by the age of 55, or potentially much younger for more severe cases.

What happens during an LDL Apheresis treatment?
Step 1:
The patient’s blood is withdrawn via a venous access and enters the plasma separator. As blood flows through the hollow fibers of the plasma separator, the plasma is then pumped into one of the two LDL ‘adsorption’ columns. As the plasma passes through the column, the LDL lipoproteins are selectively ‘adsorbed’ by the dextran sulfate.

Step 2:
The LDL depleted plasma exits the column and is recombined with the blood cells exiting the separator, all of which is returned to the patient through a second venous access.

Step 3:
When the first column has completed ‘adsorbing’ LDL, the computer regulated machine automatically switches the plasma flow to the second column.

Step 4:
The plasma remaining in the first column is returned to the patient. The column is then regenerated, washing out the LDL lipoproteins to the waste lines. After washing out the waste lines, the column is re-primed completely and ready for the next cycle of ‘adsorption’.

Potential Risks and Side Effects
Low blood pressure is the most common adverse reaction associated with LDL Apheresis, and in US clinical trials occurred in < 1% of patients. Other uncommon reactions include nausea, flushing, light-headedness and discomfort at needle site. If you experience any symptoms please notify your nurse immediately. Adverse events are more common in patients taking ACE inhibitors, please advise the Apheresis doctor if you are taking this type of medication.