

2014

Kidney Surgery

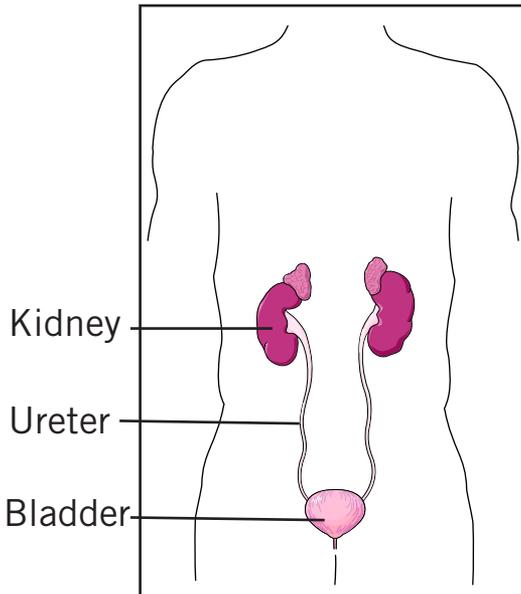
Kidney Surgery

Your doctor has arranged for you to have kidney surgery. The medical name for your surgery is _____ . This pamphlet will answer some of your questions about your stay in hospital and care at home.

How do my kidneys work?

A kidney is the same shape as a kidney bean and about the size of your fist. The kidneys are just above your waist and are partly covered by your rib cage.

The kidneys make urine by taking away waste material from your blood that your body does not need. Urine (pee) then travels through hollow tubes (ureters) to the bladder. It is stored here until you pee.



Before your surgery

Please read the pamphlet *Planning for your Hospital Stay After Surgery*.

After your surgery

You will go to a special nursing unit to recover from the anesthetic. Your breathing, pulse, and blood pressure will be checked often. When you are fully awake and stable, you will go to your hospital room.

Intravenous (IV) and food

- You may have an IV for about 24 hours. It is usually taken out when you are eating and drinking.
- Your nurse will be checking your bowels. You will be able to eat when your bowels are active again.

Measuring fluid

- Your nurse will ask you to keep track of how much you drink.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of fluid a day.
- After your catheter (hollow tube to drain urine) is taken out, you will be asked to measure your urine.

Incision

Your wound will be closed with staples (metal clips) or Steri-Strips™ (special tapes). Sometimes, the nurse will take them out before you go home. If not, you will get an appointment with your surgeon or family doctor who will take the staples out 7-10 days after your surgery. Steri-Strips™ can be peeled off when they become loose, usually around 7-10 days after your surgery.

Discomfort and/or pain

- It is normal to have pain after surgery. Talk about pain medication choices with your doctor or nurse.
- Please read the pamphlet *Managing Pain After Surgery*.
- Pain medication will be given as needed. We recommend that you take pain medication regularly for the first 24 hours and before doing any activity.
- You and your nurse can plan the activities around when your medication is given.

Bladder catheter

You may have a catheter in your bladder that is connected to a collection bag. The bag should always hang below your bladder. The catheter is usually taken out 24-48 hours after your surgery.

Drainage tube

You may have a drain near the incision (cut) for a few days. It will drain blood and fluid from the area.

At home

Controlling pain or soreness

- You may take pills for pain or soreness for a short period of time. Take the pills as you are told by your doctor or pharmacist.
- Watch out for constipation.
- **Do not drink alcohol** when you are taking pain pills.

Healthy eating

- It may take some time for your appetite to go back to normal. During this time, it may help to eat smaller meals more often.
- Healthy meals will help your body heal faster.
- Continue to follow your usual diet.
- The foods that you eat will affect your bowel movements. Eat foods high in fibre (such as bran, vegetables, and fruit).

- Drink 6-8 glasses of water a day unless you are not allowed to because of another health problem.
- Ask your doctor about using stool softeners or laxatives if needed.
- Remember that you do not need a bowel movement every day to be healthy.

Activity

- You will find that you will get tired easily and may need extra rest. Gradually your energy will come back.
- Walking is the best exercise for you. Start slowly and increase the distance each day.
- Some examples of moderate activities are: light housework, preparing small meals, and riding as a passenger in a car for a short distance.
- Have sex when you feel well enough.
- Do not drive a car for 2 weeks.
- Do not drive if you are taking pain pills.
- Remember to always wear your **SEATBELT**.

For the next 6 weeks do not:

- Lift anything heavier than 10 pounds (such as children, laundry, groceries, or luggage).
- Move furniture, mow the lawn, or shovel snow.
- Take long car trips (if a long car trip is needed, have someone else drive).
- Do strenuous exercise.

Care of your incision

- You may shower 2 days after your surgery. Pat your incision lightly to wash and dry. There should not be any drainage or increased redness from the area. If your bandage must be left on, tape Saran Wrap® or plastic wrap over it to keep it dry.
- You may have a bath when the incision is healed in about 10 days.

Follow up care

- A visit with your doctor will be planned a few weeks after you go home. It is very important that you keep this appointment.
- You will get a letter for your family doctor at this follow up appointment.

Going back to work

- Your general health, recovery, and type of work will determine when you can go back to work. Talk about this with your doctor.

Important

Train your bladder by going to the bathroom at least every 4 hours. Do not hold your urine. Always go to the bathroom when you feel the urge.

Call your doctor if you have:

- Fever and/or chills.
- Nausea and/or vomiting.
- Increased redness, swelling, or warmth around the incision.
- Increased pain or tenderness around the incision.
- Separation of the edges of the incision.
- Drainage from the incision.
- Blood in your urine.
- Trouble passing your urine.

If you need to see a doctor, please contact your family doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department unless otherwise instructed by your Urologist.

If you have any questions, please ask.
We are here to help you.

Looking for more health information?

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles, and online health information.
For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.