

2014

# Laparoscopic Kidney Removal (Nephrectomy)

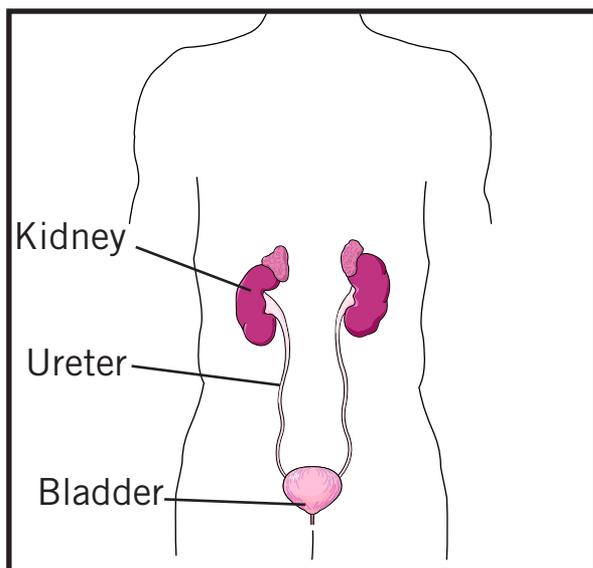
# Laparoscopic Kidney Removal (Nephrectomy)

Your doctor has arranged for you to have your kidney taken out. A surgeon will use a laparoscope (tiny telescope) to do your surgery. 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. It is 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 (pee) by taking away waste material from your blood that your body does not need. The urine then travels through hollow tubes (ureters) to the bladder. It is stored here until you urinate.



## **Can I be healthy with only one kidney?**

Yes, if your remaining kidney is healthy. The remaining kidney can do all the work.

### **Surgery**

The laparoscope is a tiny telescope used by your surgeon to see clearly into your abdomen (tummy). The surgeon will make tiny incisions or punctures to take out the kidney.

The **advantages** of laparoscopic surgery include less chance of infection, a shorter scar, less discomfort, a shorter hospital stay, and a quicker return to your normal activities.

### **Before your surgery**

Please read the pamphlet *Planning for your Hospital Stay After Surgery* about how to prepare for surgery.

### **After your surgery**

You will be taken to a special recovery area. Your breathing, pulse, and blood pressure will be checked often. When you are fully awake and stable, you will be taken to your hospital room.

## **Intravenous (IV) and/or food**

- You may have an IV for about 24 hours. It is usually taken out when you are able to eat and drink again.
- 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.
- You will be asked to collect your urine in a urinal or hat after your catheter (hollow tube for urine) is taken out.

## **Incision (cut)**

- Your wound will be closed with staples (metal clips) or Steri-Strips® (special tapes).
- You will need to make an appointment with your family doctor who will remove the staples 7-10 days after your surgery.
- Steri-Strips® can be peeled off when they get loose, about 7 days after your surgery.

## **Discomfort and/or pain**

It is normal to have pain after your surgery. Pain medication will be given as needed. Taking pain medication regularly for the first 24 hours and before doing any activity is recommended. You and your nurse can plan activities around when your medication is given.

## **Bladder catheter**

You may have a catheter in your bladder connected to a collection bag. The bag should always hang below your waist. The catheter is usually taken out 24-48 hours (1-2 days) after your surgery.

## At home

### Controlling pain or soreness

- You may take pills for pain or soreness at home for a short period of time. Take the pills as told by your doctor.
- **Do not drink alcohol while you are taking pain pills.**

### Healthy eating

- It may take a while for your appetite to return to normal. During this time it may help to eat smaller meals more often throughout the day.
- Healthy meals will help your body heal faster.
- Continue to follow your usual diet.
- Eat foods high in fibre, such as bran cereals, whole wheat bread, vegetables, and fresh fruit.
- Drink 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 you need them. Some pain pills cause constipation.
- Remember that you **do not** need a bowel movement every day to be healthy.

## **Activity**

- Avoid contact sports **for the rest of your life** to protect your only kidney from injury.
- You will find that you will get tired easily and may need extra rest. Your energy will return slowly.
- Some examples of good activities are: light housework, preparing small meals, and riding as a passenger in a car for short distances.
- Walking is the best thing for you after surgery. Start slowly and increase the distance each day.
- Go back to having sex when you feel well enough.
- **Do not drive a car if you are taking pain pills.**

## **For the next 2 weeks do not:**

- Lift anything heavier than 10 pounds (such as children, laundry, groceries, luggage).
- Move furniture.
- Mow the lawn.
- Shovel snow.
- Take long car trips (if you have to take a long car trip, have someone else drive).
- Do strenuous (hard) exercise.

## Care of your incision (cut)

- 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® (plastic wrap) over it to keep it dry.
- You may have a bath when the staples are taken out.

## Follow-up care

- A visit will be booked with your doctor a few weeks after you go home. It is very important that you keep this appointment.
- You will get a letter to give your family doctor.

## 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 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.



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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years.