

## URETERAL STENTS

In patients who have, or might have, an obstruction (blockage) of the kidney, an internal drainage tube called a 'stent' is commonly placed in the ureter, between the kidney and the bladder. This is placed there in order to temporarily relieve the obstruction.

### **What is a Ureteric Stent?**

A ureteric stent is a specially designed hollow tube, made of a flexible plastic material that is placed in the ureter.

### **How does a stent stay in place?**

The stents are designed to stay in the urinary system by having both the ends coiled. The top end coils in the kidney and the lower end coils inside the bladder to prevent its displacement. The stents are flexible enough to withstand various body movements.

### **How long will the stent stay in the body?**

This can range from a few days to months depending on each particular situation. A stent in the right position can stay in for 3-6 months without the need to replace it. **STENTS ARE NOT PERMANENT!!!** A stent must either be exchanged for a new one or removed after a maximum of 6 months.

### **How is a stent removed?**

Usually a small fiber-optic scope (cystoscope) is advanced into the bladder through the urinary channel (urethra) and the stent is grasped and removed. Sometimes a stent can be left with a thread attached to its lower end that stays outside the body. The doctors can remove such stents by just pulling this thread.

## LIVING WITH A URETERAL STENT

Ureteric stents are designed to allow people to lead as normal a life as possible, but they may cause side effects. In placing a stent, there is a balance between its advantages in relieving the obstruction and any possible disadvantages in the form of side effects

### **What are the possible side effects associated with a stent?**

Many patients do not experience problems with the stents. In those who do the symptoms can range from very mild to severe.

The majority of patients with a stent in place will be aware of its presence most of the time.

### **Urinary symptoms**

- an increased frequency of passing urine
- the need to rush to pass urine (urgency)
- blood in the urine, ranging from tiny amounts to actual red urine.
- a sensation of incomplete emptying of the bladder.
- very occasionally a slight risk of incontinence episodes (mostly in women).

### **Discomfort or pain**

- Stents can cause discomfort or pain, often in the flank, groin or genitals
- Many people will get pain in the kidney (on the side with the stent) when they urinate, which is a normal event and often lessens with time.

### **Physical activities and sports**

There are generally no physical limitations due to the stent, however, you may experience some discomfort in the kidney area and passing of blood in your urine, especially if sports or strenuous physical activities are involved. Some people get tired more quickly when a stent is in place.

### **Work activities**

You can continue to work normally with the stent inside your body, however, if the work involves lot of physical activities, you may experience more discomfort and especially blood.

### **Travel and holidays**

It is possible to travel with a stent in place, provided the underlying kidney condition and your general health allows this. There is always a chance however, that you could have difficulties due to the stent that would then require treatment away from your normal urologist (though this is uncommon).

### **Sex**

There are no restrictions on your sex life due to the presence of a stent, unless there is a thread attached, in which case sexual activity should be avoided as it may dislodge the stent.

### **When should I call for a help (785-749-0639)?**

- if you experience a constant and unbearable pain associated with the stent.
- if you have symptoms of urinary tract infection such as: a raised temperature, pain during passing urine and feeling unwell (urinalysis will often look infected due to the stent, so the only way to diagnose an infection is with a culture)
- the stent gets dislodged or falls out.
- if you notice a very large amount of blood in the urine with blood clots. Again, some blood in the urine is to be expected.