

Ureteral Stents

For kidney transplant patients

This handout explains ureteral stents, which are often placed during kidney transplant surgery.

What is a ureteral stent?

A *ureteral stent* is a small, soft, flexible tube about 6 inches long. It is placed in the *ureter*, the tube that takes urine from the kidney to the bladder. Ends of the stent are shaped like the letter “J.” One end of the tube sits inside the kidney and the other end is inside the bladder.



Most kidney transplant recipients have a ureteral stent placed during their transplant surgery.

Talk with your doctor if you have questions about your ureteral stent.

The stent helps the body heal the connection between the transplanted kidney and the bladder. It can be left in place up to 8 weeks.

Are there any side effects to having a stent?

Most times, a ureteral stent does not cause any problems. But, it can cause irritation, the need to urinate often, infection, or blood in your urine. Rarely, a stent can cause sharp pain at the end of *urination* (peeing).

Very rarely, the stent can move from where it was placed. It may then pass out of your body when you urinate. If this happens, you may leak urine.

If you see the stent pass with your urine, save the stent. Call us and bring the stent with you to your clinic visit and show it to the nurse.

How is the stent removed?

Using a Cystoscope

Most times, your urologist will use a *cystoscope* to remove the stent when it is no longer needed. A cystoscope is a thin tube (like a urinary catheter) with a tiny camera on the end. Your nurse coordinator will tell you if you need to take antibiotic medicines before the stent is removed.

You will go to the clinic to have your stent removed. We will first clean your genitals, and apply a local *anesthetic* (numbing) jelly to numb your urethra so that you do not feel any pain.

Your urologist will then insert the cystoscope through your urethra and into your bladder. The camera on the end lets the urologist see the stent and then remove it. This is done by inserting a grasper through the cystoscope. Since the stent is very flexible, it straightens and slides out easily. Most times, the process takes only a few minutes.

Surgery

There are a few people who cannot handle this procedure when it is done in clinic with only the numbing gel. This may be because:

- They have had problems with other procedures that involved a cystoscope
- Their urethra is shaped in a way that does not allow us to use a cystoscope

If any of these are true for you, you may need *general anesthetic* (sleeping medicine) to remove your stent.

What will I feel when the stent is removed?

For most people, removing the stent with a cystoscope is easier than they expected. Most do not feel the stent sliding out. But, some people do feel it. Often, people are surprised when they learn that the stent has been already been removed and the process is over.

Some men have discomfort when their stent is removed, most often because they have a longer urethra. This discomfort may be from the cystoscope itself or from the feeling of the stent being removed.

What can I expect after the stent is removed?

After your stent is removed:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Your urine may have some blood in it.
- You may need to urinate often.
- You may get a urinary tract infection.

Call the transplant team if you:

- Have fever higher than 100°F (37.8°C)
- Have chills
- See blood clots in your urine
- Cannot pass urine
- Have any other questions or concerns that cannot wait until your clinic visit

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Transplant Services:
206.598.3882