Urology Department

Holmium laser bladder neck incision

What is the evidence base for this information?
This leaflet includes advice from consensus panels, the British Association of Urological Surgeons, the Department of Health and evidence based sources; it is, therefore, a reflection of best practice in the UK. It is intended to supplement any advice you may already have been given by your urologist or nurse specialist as well as the surgical team at Addenbrooke’s. Alternative treatments are outlined below and can be discussed in more detail with your urologist or specialist nurse.

What does the procedure involve?
This involves telescopic laser incision through the prostate and bladder outlet to widen the urinary channel with temporary insertion of a catheter for bladder drainage.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?
Drugs, use of a catheter/stent, observation or conventional bladder neck incision using electrical current rather than a laser.

What should I expect before the procedure?
If you are taking a prescription for Warfarin, Aspirin, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban, Edoxaban or Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor or blood thinning medication you should ensure that the Urology staff are aware of this well in advance of your admission.

You will usually be admitted on the day of surgery. Your general fitness, to screen for the carriage of MRSA will be assessed and sometimes some baseline investigations performed prior to your admission. This can, on occasions, be done by telephone or you may be asked to attend a pre-admission clinic approximately 14 days before your admission, depending on your medical history.

After admission, you will be seen by members of the medical team which may include the consultant, junior urology doctors and your named nurse.
You will be asked not to eat or drink for six hours before surgery and, immediately before the operation, you may be given a pre-medication by the anaesthetist which will make you dry-mouthed and pleasantly sleepy.

Please be sure to inform your urologist in advance of your surgery if you have any of the following:

- an artificial heart valve
- a coronary artery stent
- a heart pacemaker or defibrillator
- an artificial joint
- an artificial blood vessel graft
- a neurosurgical shunt
- any other implanted foreign body
- a prescription for Warfarin, Aspirin, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban, Edoxaban or Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor or blood thinning medication
- a previous or current MRSA infection
- high risk of variant CJD (if you have received a corneal transplant, a neurosurgical dural transplant or previous injections of human derived growth hormone)

**What happens during the procedure?**

Either a full general anaesthetic (where you will be asleep throughout the procedure) or a spinal anaesthetic (where you are awake but unable to feel anything from the waist down) will be used. All methods minimise pain; your anaesthetist will explain the pros and cons of each type of anaesthetic to you.

The operation, on average, takes 20 to 30 minutes.

You will usually be given an injectable antibiotic before the procedure after checking for any drug allergies.

The laser is used to incise through any tight areas in the bladder outlet and prostate. Often, this allows sufficient widening of the urinary channel but, sometimes, a small amount of prostate tissue is removed at the same time to ensure the channel is clear and open. A catheter is normally left to drain the bladder at the end of the procedure.
What happens immediately after the procedure?

There is always some bleeding from the prostate area after the operation. The urine is usually clear of blood within 12 hours, although some patients lose blood for longer. It is unusual to require a blood transfusion after laser surgery.

It is useful to drink as much as possible in the first 12 hours after the operation because this helps the urine clear of blood more quickly. Sometimes, fluid is flushed through the catheter to clear the urine of blood.

You will be able to eat and drink on the same day as the operation when you feel able to.

Most patients can be safely discharged on the same day as the surgery with the catheter left in for up to 1 week to allow any internal swelling related to the surgery to resolve. When you return to the ward after surgery, the nurse will show you how to look after the catheter at home. The colour of urine draining through the catheter will be monitored by the nurse and any temporary fluid running through the catheter will be adjusted and stopped as appropriate. Once we know that you can eat and drink without feeling sick, that you can get out of bed and walk safely, and that you know how to look after the catheter at home, you can be discharged.

Before you leave the hospital you will be given written information on who to contact if you have any questions or problems after you leave the hospital. You will also be given information on who will remove the catheter for you and when. Sometimes we arrange for catheters to be removed at your home by your local district nurse, and sometimes you will be asked to return to the hospital for catheter removal. Full instructions will be given to you about what has been arranged in your case.

Before you come in for surgery please ensure you have made arrangements for the following:

- Someone is able to drive you home on the day of your surgery.
- Someone will be able to stay with you the first night after surgery.

For some patients, going home on the same day as the surgery is not appropriate or feasible. The final decision on whether you are suitable for same day discharge is made on the day of surgery. Please come prepared to stay one night in hospital in case this might be necessary.

What to expect on the day your catheter is removed

The catheter is generally removed at midnight on the first night after surgery. This allows your bladder time to fill overnight so that, in the morning, the doctors can decide whether you can go home without the catheter. At first, it may be painful to pass your urine and it may come more frequently than normal. Any initial discomfort can be relieved by tablets or injections and the frequency usually improves within a few weeks.

Some of your symptoms, especially frequency, urgency and getting up at night to pass urine, may not improve for several months because these are often due to bladder overactivity (which takes time to resolve after prostate surgery) rather than prostate or bladder neck blockage. It is not unusual for your urine to turn bloody again for the first 24 to 48 hours after catheter removal. Some blood may be visible in the urine even up to six weeks after surgery but this is usually not a problem.
Are there any side effects?
Most procedures have a potential for side effects. You should be reassured that, although all these complications are well recognised, the majority of patients do not suffer any problems after a urological procedure.

Please use the check boxes to tick off individual items when you are happy that they have been discussed to your satisfaction:

**Common (greater than one in 10)**
- [ ] Temporary mild burning, bleeding and frequency of urination after the procedure
- [ ] No semen is produced during an orgasm in approximately 20%
- [ ] Treatment may not relieve all the urinary symptoms
- [ ] Poor erections (impotence) in approximately 14%
- [ ] Infection of the bladder, testes or kidney requiring antibiotic treatment
- [ ] Possible need to repeat the treatment later due to re-obstruction (approximately 10%)
- [ ] Injury to the urethra (water pipe) causing delayed scar formation

**Occasional (between one in 10 and one in 50)**
- [ ] May need to self-catheterise to empty the bladder fully if the bladder itself is weak
- [ ] Failure to pass urine after surgery requiring a new catheter

**Rare (less than one in 50)**
- [ ] Bleeding requiring a return to theatre and/or blood transfusion (less than 2%)

What should I expect when I get home?
When you leave hospital, you will be given a discharge summary of your admission. This holds important information about your inpatient stay and your operation. If, in the first few weeks after your discharge, you need to call your GP for any reason or to attend another hospital, please take this summary with you to allow the doctors to see details of your treatment. This is particularly important if you need to consult another doctor within a few days of your discharge.

Most patients feel tired and below par for a week or two because this is major surgery. Over this period, any frequency usually settles gradually.

What else should I look out for?
If you experience increasing frequency, burning or difficulty on passing urine or worrying bleeding, contact your GP.

About one man in five experiences bleeding some 10 to 14 days after getting home; this is due to scabs separating from the incision in the prostate. Increasing your fluid intake should stop this bleeding quickly but, if it does not, you should contact your GP who will prescribe some antibiotics for you. In the event of severe bleeding, passage of clots or sudden difficulty in passing urine, you should contact your GP immediately since it may be necessary for you to be re-admitted to hospital.
Are there any other important points?
Incision of your prostate should not adversely affect your sex life provided you are getting normal erections before the surgery. Sexual activity can be resumed as soon as you are comfortable, usually after three to four weeks.

It is often helpful to start pelvic floor exercises as soon as possible after the operation since this can improve your control when you get home. The symptoms of an overactive bladder may take three months to resolve whereas the flow is improved immediately.

If you need any specific information on these exercises, please contact the ward staff or the specialist nurses. The symptoms of an overactive bladder may take three months to resolve whereas the flow is improved immediately.

Most patients require a recovery period of two to three weeks at home before they feel ready for work. We recommend three and four weeks’ rest before resuming any job, especially if it is physically strenuous and you should avoid any heavy lifting during this time. You should not drive until you feel fully recovered; two weeks is the minimum period that most patients require before resuming driving.

Driving after surgery
It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fit to drive following your surgery.

You do not normally need to notify the DVLA unless you have a medical condition that will last for longer than three months after your surgery and may affect your ability to drive. You should, however, check with your insurance company before returning to driving. Your doctors will be happy to provide you with advice on request.

Privacy & Dignity
Same sex bays and bathrooms are offered in all wards except critical care and theatre recovery areas where the use of high tech equipment and/or specialist one to one care is required.

Hair removal before an operation
For most operations, you do not need to have the hair around the site of the operation removed. However, sometimes the healthcare team need to see or reach your skin and if this is necessary they will use an electric hair clipper with a single-use disposable head, on the day of the surgery. Please do not shave the hair yourself or use a razor to remove hair, as this can increase the risk of infection. Your healthcare team will be happy to discuss this with you.

References
NICE clinical guideline No 74: Surgical site infection (October 2008);
Department of Health: High Impact Intervention No 4: Care bundle to preventing surgical site infection (August 2007).
Is there any research being carried out in this field at Addenbrooke’s Hospital?

All procedures on the prostate using the Holmium laser are currently under review by the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and are subject to continuous audit within the department.

Who can I contact for more help or information?

**Oncology nurses**

**Uro-oncology nurse specialist**  
01223 586748

**Bladder cancer nurse practitioner (haematuria, chemotherapy and BCG)**  
01223 274608

**Prostate cancer nurse practitioner**  
01223 274608 or 216897 or bleep 154-548

**Surgical care practitioner**  
01223 348590 or 256157 or bleep 154-351

**Non-oncology nurses**

**Urology nurse practitioner (incontinence, urodynamics, catheter patients)**  
01223 274608 or 586748 or bleep 157-237

**Urology nurse practitioner (stoma care)**  
01223 349800

**Urology nurse practitioner (stone disease)**  
01223 349800 or bleep 152-879

**Patient Advice and Liaison Centre (PALS)**  
Telephone:  
+44 (0)1223 216756 or 257257  
+44 (0)1223 274432 or 274431  
PatientLine: *801 (from patient bedside telephones only)

E mail: pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk  
Mail: PALS, Box No 53

Addenbrooke's Hospital  
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

**Chaplaincy and multi faith community**  
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 217769  
E mail: chaplaincy@addenbrookes.nhs.uk  
Mail: The Chaplaincy, Box No 105  
Addenbrooke's Hospital  
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

**MINICOM System ("type" system for the hard of hearing)**  
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 217589
What should I do with this leaflet?
Thank you for taking the trouble to read this patient information leaflet. If you wish to sign it and retain a copy for your own records, please do so below.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet to be filed in your hospital records for future reference, please let your urologist or specialist nurse know. If you do, however, decide to proceed with the scheduled procedure, you will be asked to sign a separate consent form which will be filed in your hospital notes and you will, in addition, be provided with a copy of the form if you wish.

I have read this patient information leaflet and I accept the information it provides.

Signature................................................................Date.......................................

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history
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Holmium laser bladder neck incision
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