Urology department

Meatal/ urethral dilatation

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?
Stretching of the urethra or the urethral opening for narrowing resulting in a poor urinary stream.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?
Surgical enlargement of the urethral opening, optical urethrotomy, self-dilatation, observation.

What should I expect before the procedure?
You will usually be admitted on the same day as your surgery although some patients require admission on the day before surgery. You will normally undergo pre assessment on the day of your clinic or an appointment for pre assessment will be made from clinic, to assess your general fitness, to screen for the carriage of MRSA and to perform some baseline investigations. 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
What happens during the procedure?
Normally, a full general anaesthetic will be used and you will be asleep throughout the procedure. In some patients, the anaesthetist may also use an epidural anaesthetic which improves or minimises pain post-operatively.

The urethra or urethral opening is stretched using metal or plastic dilators after passing local anaesthetic jelly to numb and lubricate the passage. Inspection of the bladder and urethra is likely to take place at the same time, especially if plastic dilators are used.

What happens immediately after the procedure?
The urethra or the opening of the urethra is stretched using a variety of instruments. It may be necessary to insert a catheter in the urethra (water pipe) after the procedure.

Average hospital stay is one day unless a catheter is inserted when it is two days.

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)**
- [ ] Mild burning or bleeding on passing urine for a short period after the operation
- [ ] Infection of the bladder requiring antibiotics
- [ ] Temporary insertion of a catheter
- [ ] Further stricture formation requiring repeated dilatation

**Occasional (between 1 in 10 and 1 in 50)**
- [ ] Damage to the urethra resulting in a “false passage” and the need for further surgery
- [ ] Infection around the urethra resulting in abscess formation
Rare (less than 1 in 50)
- Delayed bleeding requiring removal of clots or further surgery

Hospital-acquired infection (overall risk for Addenbrooke’s)
- Colonisation with MRSA (0.01%, two in 15,500)
- Clostridium difficile bowel infection (0.02%; three in 15,500)
- MRSA bloodstream infection (0.00%; 0 in 15,000)

(These rates may be greater in high risk patients eg with long term drainage tubes, after removal of the bladder for cancer, after previous infections, after prolonged hospitalisation or after multiple admissions.)

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 service (PALS)
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 216756
PatientLine: *801 (from patient bedside telephones only)
email: 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
email: chaplaincy@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Mail: The Chaplaincy, Box No 105
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.

Help with this leaflet:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk