

The 15-minute op to get men back in the flow: New metal implant ideal solution for treating enlarged prostate

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A minute new implant appears to be the ideal low-tech solution to treating an enlarged prostate.

In a trial of 20 patients aged between 43 and 90, the UroLift System was found to reduce symptoms – which include a weak or slow urinary stream – and increase urine flow by more than 50 per cent.

The procedure takes 15 minutes.

The new approach to treating an enlarged prostate – also known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) – involves no cutting or removal of tissue.

Instead, 4mm metal tabs are used to open the urethra, which is often forced closed by prostate tissue.

'This is a complete departure from the way we have been treating the condition,' says **Neil Barber, consultant urological surgeon at Frimley Park Hospital in Surrey**, who is leading UK trials.

'The approach has been approved for use in the UK and I have carried out a dozen procedures. All the patients were delighted with the results.'

BPH affects almost every man as he grows older – nine out of ten of those in their 70s and 80s suffer some symptoms.

The prostate is a walnut-sized gland that forms part of the reproductive system. It surrounds the urethra, the channel through which urine passes out of the body.

As the urethra is narrowed due to the tissue growth around it, symptoms develop which include a weak urinary stream, a frequent need to urinate, or a flow that stops and starts.

BPH is usually treated with medication such as alpha blockers – which relax the muscles around the bladder neck – or surgery to remove prostate tissue. However, there are potential side effects including erectile dysfunction and incontinence. The new procedure is minimally

invasive and can be carried out under either general or local anaesthetic. A needle-carrying tube – the UroLift delivery system – is first inserted through the urethra. The needle delivers the minute metal tabs – one to the outside of the prostate and one to the inside of the urethra.

The tabs are joined by suture material so they are pulled taut, opening up the urethra, with the outside of the prostate gland taking the tension. Two to six tabs can be used. 'It's a bit like a treasury tag used to hold documents together,' says Mr Barber.



New op: The 15 minute procedure increased urine flow by more than 50 per cent

'Patients have a light general anaesthetic and spend half a day in hospital. Evidence says UroLift is effective and that it does what it says on the tin by improving urinary symptoms with no loss of sexual function. It is most suitable for younger men who want to preserve sexual function and wish to resume work as soon as possible.'

The prostate doubles in size early in puberty and begins to grow again after the age of 35. Its enlargement in later life may be linked to age-related falls in testosterone.

Engineer Leslie Ross, 56, had the UroLift procedure in July. 'I had needed to go to the lavatory every ten minutes for four years,' he says. 'I was in constant discomfort. The procedure was quick and the symptoms had gone within a day of the operation. I cannot recommend it highly enough.'