

Recovering with a Ureteric stent

A ureteric stent is a polyurethane tube. There are a number of urological procedures where it can be necessary to insert a stent. It is placed in the ureter - the pipe that connects the kidney to the bladder (Figure 1). A coil at either end (Figure 2) prevents the tube from moving up or down. This stent may remain in place for a few days or for a few weeks, to aid the healing process.

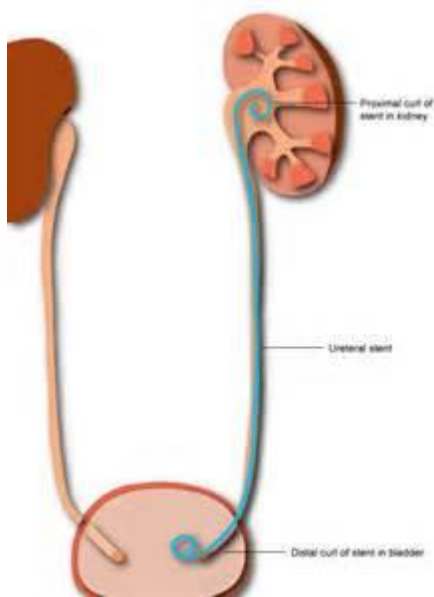


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

A stent is needed to allow the kidney to drain. Blocked kidneys are potentially very painful and if infection is also present, sometimes dangerous. The stent prevents the kidney from blocking.

What to expect with a stent

Some people do not know they have a stent in place and carry on with life as normal. Other people may develop 'stent symptoms', these usually improve 3-5 days after the stent is inserted and will resolve 24-48 hours after the stent is removed. Stent symptoms are normal and may include:

1. Pain in the kidney area or in the genitalia, particularly when passing urine
2. The need to pass urine more frequently and with a greater urgency than usual for you
3. Blood in the urine, particularly if you take exercise

If you develop any of these symptoms, do not worry, they are of no concern, but may be troublesome to you. We can give you medication to try and alleviate these symptoms. The only

reason for concern is if you develop a fever or a temperature, in which case please seek medical help.

Removing a stent

Stents can stay in for many months but are usually left for a few days or weeks. When it comes to removing your stent there are two ways to do this.

1. Removing it yourself: a thread (similar to fishing line) may be left attached to the bottom of the stent at the end of your procedure and then taped to the thigh or penis. You will be told when to remove your stent.
Two hours prior to taking your stent out, it is advisable to take some painkillers. This is not because it is painful to remove the stent, but because occasionally it may hurt in your kidney region a few hours after the stent is out.
Firstly detach the tape, then pull the string towards your feet in one continuous movement for about 3-5 seconds. You will feel some gentle pulling. The stent is 22-26cm long, and with the string attached a further 15cm. You may prefer to do this in the shower/bath, on a bed or even to ask someone else to do it for you!
2. If you prefer, the stent can be removed by your surgeon, either using the string or by passing a small telescope into the bladder under local anaesthetic (awake). The stent is grasped and removed.