

Taking care of yourself after urethral reconstruction surgery

Information for Dr. Davies' patients

Contact information

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For emergencies, call Hamilton Health Sciences Paging at 905-521-5030 and ask to speak with the urologist-on-call.

Medications

Dr. Davies will give you prescriptions for 4 medications that you need to take after surgery.

Narcotic pain medication

- Narcotics are strong medications that help control pain.
- **Do not drive while taking narcotics.**
- Narcotics may cause constipation. Drinking lots of fluids, eating foods high in fibre (such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) and taking a stool softener may help.

Antibiotics

- Antibiotics help prevent or fight infection. Continue to take them for 3 weeks after your surgery.
- Antibiotics may cause stomach upset or diarrhea. Taking a probiotic while you are on antibiotics may help. You can buy probiotics in grocery stores, health food stores and pharmacies. If you have questions or need help choosing a probiotic, talk with a pharmacist.

Anticholinergic: Detrol (tolterodine)

- Detrol helps to reduce bladder spasms.
- Continue to take Detrol until the day before your voiding trial appointment (about 10 days after leaving the hospital).

Sedative: Valium (diazepam)

- Valium helps control night erections.
- Continue to take this medication for 3 weeks after your surgery.
- **Do not drive while taking this medication.**

Follow-up appointments

Our office will contact you with two appointments:

- About 3 weeks after you leave the hospital you will have a voiding trial.
- About 3 to 4 weeks after your surgery you will have urethral x-rays. Your catheter will be removed at this time.

Home care services

- Our office will arrange for you to have home care services, provided by the Local Health Integration Network (formerly CCAC: Community Care Access Centre).
- For 3 weeks after your surgery, Home Care Nurses will care for your wound and stitches (sutures).

Wound care

- Each patient heals at a different rate. Some patients are more likely to have swelling in the genital area than others. For example, patients who have had a number of surgeries on their penis will tend to swell more. It can help to wear compression shorts or supportive underwear for 3 to 4 weeks after surgery.
- These clothes help keep your penis in an upright position, which reduces swelling. If you have a stenting catheter in your urethra, you can roll it up inside the underwear.
- Erections after surgery will not harm the repair, but they be uncomfortable for quite some time. It will help to take Valium while the erections are bothersome. Keep in mind that erections play an important part in keeping the tissues flexible as they heal.
- At home, continue to shower 2 times a day, until your wounds are well healed. Do not put any ointments (such as Polysporin®) on the incision as this may cause the stitches to dissolve too early.

Suture care

- In the majority of patients, stitches in the penis are dissolvable and do not need to be removed. If you have permanent stitches, we will let you know when they will be removed.
- If you had a graft for reconstruction, the graft donor site may be closed with a permanent stitch that looks like a long loop.
Do not cut the loop.
- When the plastic dressing over the stitch is removed, tape the loop down to your side with paper or silk-like surgical tape. The loop should stay in place for about 3 weeks to provide support and limit the stretching and spreading of a scar.
- If you only have one incision behind your scrotum, it will be closed with stitches that dissolve and do not need to be removed. You may notice a small amount of drainage from the incision. All you need to do is keep the area clean.

Catheter care

- If you have a catheter in your urethra, put a small dab of ointment (such as Polysporin®) at the opening of your urethra. This reduces irritation and lets your penis slide along the catheter during an erection.
- You may have a suprapubic tube (catheter). It is common to have some redness and discharge from around the tube that may look like pus. Keep this area clean by running water over it in the shower. Do not put any ointment around the area. When the tube is taken out, the site will heal from the bottom out. You do not need additional surgery to have this tube removed. Suprapubic tube sites heal without much difficulty in the majority of patients.

Activities

- Do not drive any vehicle until your catheter is removed at your voiding trial appointment. Keep in mind that after major surgery, your ability to drive is affected by wound discomfort, tubes, and pain medications.
- Avoid moderate to heavy activity for about 6 weeks. This means no strenuous exercise or lifting anything heavier than 10 lbs (4.5 kg).
- No sexual activity for 10 weeks.

