Improving control of your bladder after Transurethral Resection of Prostate Gland (TURP) or Bladder Neck Incision (BNI)

Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who have had a Transurethral Resection of Prostate Gland (TURP) or Bladder Neck Incision (BNI). Information is provided about what to expect after your surgery and how to manage your recovery to have the best outcome.

Definition

These operations are performed on patients who have developed an enlarged prostate or in those when the bladder neck has become narrowed.

Symptoms

After the operation you may still experience problems associated with the control of your bladder. These may include frequency (the need to pass urine more than every 1 to 2 hours), urgency (not being able to wait when you experience the urge to pass urine) and urge leakage (you may begin to pass urine before you are able to reach the toilet). You may also have to get up at night to pass urine.

These symptoms occur because the muscle which contracts the bladder may have become sensitive or overactive before you had your operation. This is because the bladder is trying to push out urine past the obstruction caused by the enlarged prostate or narrowed bladder neck. Once the obstruction has been removed, the bladder still tries to push urine out in the same way.

Symptoms of reduced bladder control are common after the operation and may take several months to settle completely.
Improving control of your bladder

The following handy hints may help you to improve the control of your bladder following the operation.

- Drink 8-10 cups of fluid per day. Cutting down will make things worse
- Avoid drinks containing caffeine (coffee, tea, cola), fizzy drinks, green tea, tomatoes, hot chocolate, alcohol and acidic fruits/fruit juices (such as orange juice). These act as an irritant to the bladder and can make things worse. Do drink squash, decaffeinated drinks, water, herbal tea, milk, Horlicks and diluted fruit juices
- Avoid constipation either by increasing fibre in your diet or having food such as prunes/prune juice/figs/apricots. Alternatively, speak to your local pharmacist about some over the counter medication for constipation relief.
- Practice your pelvic floor exercises regularly – see leaflet ‘GHPI0322 Pelvic Floor exercises for men’.

Retraining your bladder after the operation may also be helpful. This is a method of gradually increasing the time between your visits to the toilet so that the bladder becomes able to hold larger quantities of urine comfortably.

Keep a record of:

- The amount of fluid you drink
- The number of times in a 24 hour period that you pass urine
- The number of times you have any leakage.

This will give you an idea of how much your bladder can hold and how long you can wait to visit the toilet. Once you have collected this information over a 3 to 4 day time period you can start re-training your bladder.

The delay-after-urge method

When you first get the urge to pass urine, try to delay going for just one minute. Then gradually increase the time delay so that you are waiting for 3 to 5 minutes. Divert your attention away from your bladder by reading a book, watching television, washing up, etc. It may take over a week to enable you to increase the time delay.
Pre-set toilet times
This involves setting fixed times to visit the toilet and overcoming all the urges that come on before that time. Decide on practical intervals based on your first records of how long you can hold onto your urine.

Discharge
Once you have been discharged from hospital following your surgery, you will either receive an appointment to see your surgeon in Outpatients or you will be telephoned at home in approximately 3 months by the nurse practitioner. This is to assess how you are progressing.

Prior to this time, if you experience any pain when you are passing urine, accompanied by a burning or stinging sensation, you need to inform your GP. These symptoms may indicate that you have a urine infection that may require treatment.

Contact information
For advice, please contact your GP or the Urology Nurse Practitioner.

Urology Nurse Practitioner
Tel: 0300 422 5193 or 0300 422 3640

Content reviewed: December 2017