

# Ureteral Stents

## What You Should Know

*Urology Care*  
FOUNDATION™

*The Official Foundation of the  
American Urological Association*

### What are Kidney Stones?

Kidney stones form when urine has high levels of minerals and salts, which can stick together and harden, forming crystals. As they build-up, they may form stones. Treatment depends on the type of stone you have, its size, location and how long you have had symptoms. There are different ways to treat kidney stones. If you and your doctor choose surgery, ureteral stents may also be used.

### What is a Ureteral Stent?

A ureteral stent is a plastic, flexible, hollow tube that helps the kidney drain urine after kidney stone surgery. A stent is placed if your doctor thinks the urine might not drain well after kidney stone surgery. Stents are often placed to stop pieces of stone or blood from blocking urine leaving the kidney and to prevent spasms in the ureter. Stents can be left with or without a string attached, which is used for stent removal.

### What can I expect with a Stent?

It is very common for stents to cause symptoms after surgery. You may notice:

- An urgent need to pass urine
- The need to pass urine more often
- Burning or pain in your lower back when passing urine
- Blood in the urine
- Feeling as if you are not able to empty your bladder all the way

- Discomfort or pain in the bladder, lower abdomen and/or lower back

### How Do I Handle Stent Symptoms?

Most patients have some symptoms, but they usually go away once the stent is removed. Until the stent is removed, you may try to:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Use pain medication to reduce discomfort or pain
- Take prescription drugs, like Tamsulosin, to reduce pain
- Use heat to help relieve pain with a heating pad or a warm bath

### Will Having a Stent Change My Daily Routine?

**Normal physical routines** may be resumed the day after your surgery. If you see increased blood in your urine when you become more active, get off your feet, rest, and drink plenty of fluids.

**Work activities, social life and travel** are not likely to change by having a stent. Most often, your daily routine may change in simply having the need to use the bathroom more often.

**Sex** may not be affected while you have a stent. However, if you have a stent with a string coming outside the body through the urethra, sex may be difficult.

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### How is a Stent Removed?

Your stent is typically removed within the first two weeks after surgery. If the stent was left with a string, you can remove it at home at the time recommended by your urologist. Some feel taking the stent out at home is less painful and more convenient. If the stent was left without a string, it will be removed at your urologist's office. Before the stent is removed, it is of great value to drink plenty of water and take any medications, if prescribed. Also, if you plan to remove the stent at home, it may help to take pain medication at least 30 minutes before the stent is removed.

### What Happens After the Stent is Removed?

While most patients do not experience any symptoms after the stent is removed, some patients experience cramping due to bladder or ureteral spasms which may lead to feelings of nausea or urinary urgency. These feelings are not unusual and will typically go away after the first 24 hours.

Continue to drink a lot of liquids and keep taking your pain medication as directed. Some doctors may prescribe medications to help alleviate these symptoms.

### When Should I Contact My Doctor?

If you are feeling concerned about your symptoms, contact your doctor's office before going to the ER. Call your doctor if you have:

- Chills and a fever higher than 101.5°F
- Nausea, vomiting and unable to drink or keep down liquids
- Severe pain that is not relieved by pain medication
- Difficulty or inability to pass urine
- Constant urine leaks
- Noticed the stent fell out



Scan QR Code with phone camera for more about Ureteral Stents.

### About the Urology Care Foundation

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic Foundation—and the official Foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make healthy changes in their lives. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more about different urologic issues, visit **UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions**. Go to **UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist** to find a doctor near you.

### Disclaimer

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for professional medical advice. It is not to be used or relied on for that purpose. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

For more information, visit **UrologyHealth.org/Download** or call 800-828-7866.

*This fact sheet is designed for adult patient education and was developed in collaboration with:*



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