

R03lite Nephrostomy

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A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at Joondalup Health Campus for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:



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This document will give you information about a nephrostomy. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is a nephrostomy?

Urine normally drains from your kidneys into your bladder through small muscular tubes called ureters. Sometimes one or both of your ureters can become blocked. A nephrostomy is a procedure to drain urine from your kidney using a catheter (tube) (see figure 1). It is usually performed by a radiologist (doctor who specialises in x-rays and scans).

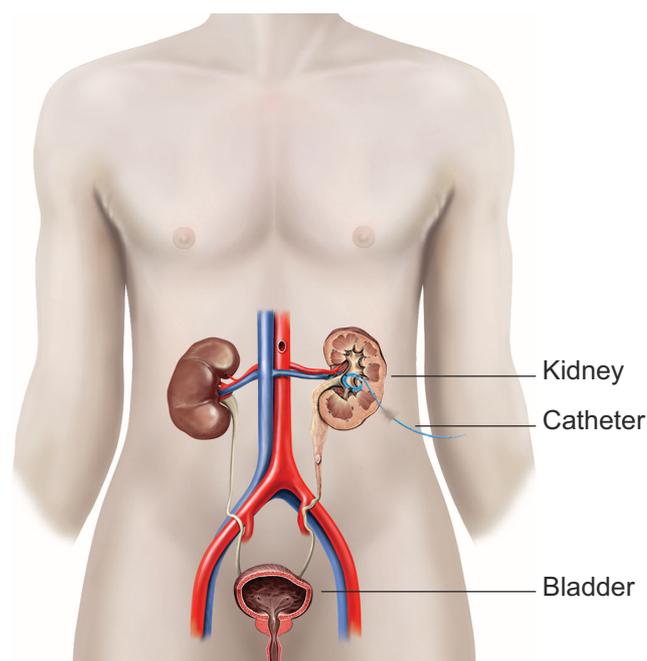


Figure 1
A nephrostomy

What are the benefits of a nephrostomy?

You should have less risk of your kidney being damaged without having to have surgery. Your doctor will have time to find out why your ureter is blocked and to treat the problem.

Are there any alternatives to a nephrostomy?

Sometimes the problem can be treated by surgery. However, this can take time and a nephrostomy will help your kidneys to carry on working.

What does the procedure involve?

The radiologist will insert the catheter through your back and in your kidney using a needle and guidewire (thin flexible wire). When the radiologist is satisfied that the needle is in the right position, they will replace it with the catheter. The catheter will be attached to a plastic bag to hold the urine.

What complications can happen?

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Leaking urine
- Allergic reaction
- Making a hole in nearby structures with the needle
- Failed nephrostomy
- Radiation exposure

How soon will I recover?

You will need to stay in bed for at least a few hours to recover and rest. The catheter will need to stay in place until the cause of the blocked ureter has been treated. You may be able to go home the same day.

Summary

A nephrostomy is usually a safe and effective way of draining urine from your kidney to give your doctor time to find out why your ureter is blocked and to treat the problem.

Acknowledgements

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