

URETERIC STENT

A ureteric stent is flexible hollow plastic tube, which is inserted in the **ureter** to create a channel for the urine to flow from the kidney to the bladder.

What is the ureter?

The ureter is a soft hollow tube that carries the urine from the kidney to the bladder. In an adult it is approximately 22 to 25 cm in length. A ureter can be obstructed by a stone or a disease process in the ureter itself or adjacent organs to the ureter that can cause compression of it. Obstruction of the ureter can be very painful and can lead to damage of the kidney.

When is a ureteric stent used?

- ❖ To relieve obstruction of the ureter caused by a stone
- ❖ After a stone has been treated a stent may be inserted to relieve obstruction caused by stone fragments or the swelling the temporary swelling that in the wall of the of the ureter by the manipulation
- ❖ A stent can be used to relieve obstruction of the ureter caused by other diseases.

How is a stent placed?

A stent is placed by first inserting a cystoscope through the urethra into the bladder to identify the opening of the ureter. The stent is then passed over a guide wire and is accurately positioned using live x-ray. The stent has a coil at each end designed to keep the stent in position.

Stent removal.

This is a very minor procedure carried out under local anaesthetic. A cystoscopy is performed and the stent is removed through the urethra.

Side effects of a ureteric stent.

Patients who have a ureteric stents commonly experience some irritating and sometimes painful symptoms, including:

- ❖ The sensation of stinging on urination.
- ❖ The need to urinate more frequently.
- ❖ Visible blood may be seen in the urine
- ❖ Pain in the loin during urination. This is pressure generated by the bladder contracting being transmitted to the kidney.

It is important to note that these symptoms are not indicative of anything going wrong. Mostly these symptoms are relatively minor and do not require any specific treatment. If the symptoms are bothersome they can be treated with medications that relieve pain or spasm.

How long is a stent required?

This varies depending on the reason it was inserted for. In most cases when the stent is inserted as part of a procedure to treat a kidney stone, it only needs to be in for a short time usually a week. In some cases a stent is required for a long time or indefinitely to relieve the obstruction of a ureter that is caused by a disease process that may not be able to be relieved surgically or by other means. In this instance the stent will need to be removed and replaced at regular intervals, usually every 6 months, however this period may vary depending on the type of stent used.

IMPORTANT.

When you have a stent inserted it is important that you have clear instructions on when and how the stent is to be removed or replaced. Leaving a stent in for too long can lead to it becoming encrusted (forming stone material on the stent) or becoming brittle. This can make it more difficult to remove without more major intervention.

For further information contact Dr Enzo Lazzaro Ph 029982 4477

Disclaimer. This information is of a general nature, it is not intended as a substitute for your own independent advice from your doctor