



Lithotripsy: information for patients

This leaflet explains what to expect during lithotripsy (kidney stone treatment).

What is lithotripsy?

Lithotripsy is a way of breaking up kidney stones so they are in small enough pieces to pass out in the urine without the need for an operation. The stones are shattered by shockwaves that are produced and focused on the stone by the lithotripter machine. You will have an X-ray or ultrasound scan before and during the treatment so that we can locate your stone and ensure the shockwaves are focused correctly. You will be given up to three treatments as not all stones break up enough in one session. Each session takes between half an hour to an hour and you will need to lie still during the treatment.

Am I able to have lithotripsy?

Please let us know if you are taking WARFARIN, CLOPIDOGREL, ASPIRIN, or other anticoagulants, as we need to schedule treatment carefully. We cannot treat pregnant patients or those with pacemakers, defibrillators, or active urinary tract infections, so please contact us if this is applicable to you.

Will it be painful?

Most people do not find the treatment painful although they are aware of the treatment being given. We recommend that you take painkillers the night before and on the morning of your treatment. You can phone us to discuss alternatives or concerns.

What should I expect afterwards?

Over the following 2-3 days you may experience some pain or discomfort as the stone fragments and small amount of blood / clots come out in your urine. This is quite normal and should not worry you. It is very important that you drink at least an extra 2-3 pints of fluid on top of your normal intake to help flush out the blood and stone fragments.

If the pain becomes severe or the bleeding persists constantly for more than 3 days or you get a high temperature or shivering attack after the treatment, it is a sign that you have an infection (sepsis) and should be dealt with immediately. You should contact your own doctor in the first instance, as they will be nearby (or go to the nearest emergency department (A&E) if out of hours). If necessary, they can contact the urology department for further advice. Following each treatment we will routinely write to your doctor so that they are kept fully informed of your progress.

Useful numbers

If you have any other queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

The Frederick Potts Unit can be contacted for advice on weekdays between 8.30am – 4.30pm via the Urology Clinical Admin Team 0118 322 8629 or email Rbb-tr.CAT3a@nhs.net. Call Hopkins Ward on 0118 322 7771 at other times.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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