



OPTILUME® drug-coated balloon urethral dilatation

This leaflet explains a treatment to relieve the symptoms of repeated narrowing of the urethra, including the benefits of treatment, its risks, possible side effects, and aftercare advice.

It provides general information and does not replace advice from your treating urology team

What is Optilume?

Optilume is a treatment used for recurrent urethral stricture disease (repeated narrowing of the urethra). It involves a balloon that widens the narrowed area of the urethra (the tube that carries urine (pee) out from your bladder) and delivers a medication called paclitaxel to help reduce the narrowing from returning. In urology, paclitaxel is used as a localised anti-scarring drug that works in tandem with the dilatation (stretching) of the balloon to open up the narrowed area.

It is usually done as a day case procedure under local anaesthetic in theatre or the outpatient department but it can also be done under general anaesthetic. The procedure usually takes less than half an hour.

Alternative treatment options are urethral dilatation, optical urethrectomy or buccal mucosal graft (BMG) urethroplasty.

Why am I having this procedure?

To improve urine flow, reduce symptoms caused by urethral narrowing, and reduce the likelihood of the narrowing returning.

Before the procedure

You may be asked to provide a urine sample and stop certain medications, such as blood thinners, if advised by your clinician. Follow fasting instructions if you are having a general anaesthetic.

During the procedure

If you are having the procedure under local anaesthetic, you will be asked to undress from the waist down, lie down on trolley and topical numbing gel will be inserted into the urethra.

A narrow telescope will be passed into the urethra and a guidewire inserted into the bladder. The Optilume balloon is inserted via a scope and a guidewire and is positioned across the stricture (the region that is narrowed) and inflated for a short period. The procedure usually takes less than half an hour. A urinary catheter (a narrow tube fitted inside the urethra) may occasionally be left in place temporarily after the procedure.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

Improved urinary flow, symptom relief, minimally invasive treatment, and reduced risk of recurrent narrowing compared with standard dilatation alone. These provide long-term improvement but the procedure can be repeated if necessary.

What are the possible risks and side effects of Optilume?

Blood in the urine (7-14%), urinary tract infection (6%), temporary discomfort when passing urine (6-9%), urinary retention (5%), recurrence of the stricture (20-30%), and rare injury to the urethra or bladder. Your clinician will discuss individual risks with you before you consent to treatment.

Aftercare advice

- **Fluid intake:** Drink plenty of water for 24–72 hours unless you have been advised to restrict fluids.
- **Activity:** Normal daily activities can be resumed after the procedure depending on your symptoms unless otherwise advised by your clinician. Sexual intercourse should be avoided for 2 weeks after the procedure and condoms should be used for 90 days due to the risk of passing paclitaxel to your partner in your semen.
- **Expected symptoms:** Mild burning, frequency, urgency, or small amounts of blood in the urine may occur for several days.
- **Medications:** Take prescribed medicines exactly as directed unless otherwise advised.
- **Catheter care:** If discharged with a catheter, follow the catheter instructions provided by your healthcare team. Ensure the drainage bag remains below bladder level.
- **When to seek urgent medical advice:** Contact your healthcare team or seek urgent care if you are unable to pass urine, develop fever or chills, have worsening pain, heavy bleeding with clots, or signs of infection.
- **Follow-up:** Attend all scheduled follow-up appointments. Further tests may be arranged to assess the success of treatment.

Contacting us

The Frederick Potts Unit can be contacted for advice on weekdays between 8.30am – 4.30pm via the Urology Clinical Admin Team (CAT 3a) Tel: 0118 322 8629 or email rbb-tr.CAT3A@nhs.net.

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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