

# RPLND

(Retroperitoneal Lymphadenectomy)



UHN

## Information for Patients

### Retroperitoneal Lymphadenectomy: For Testicular cancer

In this operation we take out your lymph nodes usually retroperitoneal area. We usually do this by making a cut in your belly and working through your abdomen. When we do this operation, we are very careful to protect your ability to ejaculate and to keep you fertile.

#### What happens before your operation?

- You have an appointment in the pre-admission department.
- We test your blood, do an ECG (electrocardiogram) and/or a chest x-ray to prepare you for the operation.
- If you have had chemotherapy with a drug like Bleomycin, we arrange for you to have Pulmonary Function tests before your operation. This test helps us to evaluate how well your lungs are working.
- You will see an anesthetist.
- You might also see a medical doctor.
- Before your operation, please consider **Sperm Banking** if you have not done so already. You can ask your doctor or nurse coordinator if you have questions about this or call 416-586-4748 for more information.
- We teach you how to do deep breathing and coughing exercises and a special exercise called Incentive Spirometry. Doing these exercises after your operation will help get air into your lungs and decrease your chances of getting pneumonia.
- You will meet the Urology Clinical coordinator who works with the urologists and can answer most of your questions about the surgery.

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## What to do the day before your operation

- On the day before your operation, drink only fluids that you can see through (apple, grape, or cranberry juice, ginger ale, popsicles, jello, clear broth or tea).
- On the day before your operation, drink the laxative that you received during your preadmission visit. We can give you a pamphlet to help you do this.
- Don't eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your operation. Your stomach must be empty for your operation. Do not chew gum or eat candy.

## What happens on the morning of your operation?

Come to the Surgical Admissions Unit 2nd floor NCSB 2 hours before your operation is scheduled. Once you arrive several things will happen.

- A nurse will prepare you for surgery.
- We will give you an intravenous (IV). This is a small needle that we put in a vein in your arm. We use it to give you one or all of the following:
  - fluids
  - antibiotics
  - pain medication

## What to expect after your operation

You will wake up in the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU). Once you are stable, we will move you back to the Nursing floor.

When you wake up, you will be attached to some tubes:

- an **IV**
- a **Nasogastric tube (NG)** – This tube goes from your nose into your stomach. It drains fluid from your stomach so that you don't get bloated or feel nauseous. The tube usually stays in for 2 - 4 days. We take it out when you can pass gas.
- a **catheter** – This tube goes up your penis into your bladder to drain urine. We usually take it out 1 - 2 days after your operation.
- a **Central Venous Pressure (CVP)** – This is like an IV but it goes into a vein in your neck. We take it out while you are still in the recovery room or on the day after your operation, when you are in the Nursing unit.

### **How will you feel?**

- It's normal to have discomfort after your surgery. This is because you will have a large incision on your abdomen. We will give you medication to help you to control your pain. We will give you Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA--this is a pump that you control yourself) or an epidural. We have information pamphlets on these methods of pain relief.
- You might feel some nausea because of the drugs we give you for pain relief. We will give you medication for this nausea.
- A few days after your operation, you may have gas pain. The best thing to do is walk.

### **How to take care of yourself right after the operation**

- Start deep breathing and coughing exercises as soon as you wake up. You should also do Incentive Spirometry. This is an exercise that we'll teach you before your operation. Both of these exercises help air get into the lower part of your lungs. They decrease your chances of getting pneumonia.
- On the day after your surgery, sit up and walk. Your nurse will help you.
- Wiggle your toes and move your feet. This will help keep the blood flowing in your legs.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Drink fluids when you can pass gas. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when you can start drinking.  
Begin taking these fluids slowly. Gradually, you can begin to drink and eat more.
- For the first few weeks after your operation, eat smaller amounts more often during the day. Eating big meals will make you feel bloated.

### **How long you will stay in the hospital**

- You can usually go home 5 - 7 days after your surgery.

### **How to take care of yourself when you go home**

- You can go back to your regular activities when you feel up to it.  
**Please note:** You will get tired easily.
- For the 4 - 6 weeks after your surgery, don't lift anything heavier than 5kg (10 lbs.). For example don't lift heavy grocery bags, pets or children.
- Keep your bowels regular and prevent constipation by:
  - Eating foods that are high in bulk (for example bran, fruits, vegetables). This will help to keep your bowels regular and prevent constipation.



- Drinking lots of fluids.
- Using mild laxatives like Metamucil, Prodiem, or Milk of Magnesia if you need them. They are available at a pharmacy without a prescription.

**Please Call your doctor or the 6A West Nursing station if:**

- your temperature goes higher than 38°C, and / or you feel chills
- you have redness or pain at your incision

**Important:**

Go to your nearest emergency department if you have pain, redness, or swelling in your calf or leg

**Your follow-up appointment**

- We will make an appointment with your doctor for 1 month after your operation. Your appointment will be at the Princess Margaret Hospital Testes Clinic.
- If you are a patient with testicular cancer, you will need regular follow-up care. Your doctor will talk to you about this.

**How to contact us:**

6A West	416-340-3521
Urology Clinical Coordinator Leah Jamnicky	416-340-4666

**Doctors' Office Numbers**

Dr. Finelli	416-946-2851
Dr. Fleshner	416-946-2989
Dr. Jewett	416-946-2909
Dr. Robinette	416-340-3855
Dr. Trachtenberg	416-946-2100

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