

# Nephrectomy

## For patients who are preparing for kidney surgery

Read this brochure to learn about:

- What a nephrectomy is
- How to prepare
- What to expect after
- Signs to watch for
- Who to contact

### I am having this type of nephrectomy:

- donor
- nephroureterectomy
- radical or simple
- laparoscopic or robotic
- partial

### I am having my surgery at:

- Toronto General Hospital
- Toronto Western Hospital



## What is a nephrectomy?

A nephrectomy is surgery to take out part or all of a kidney.

- A **partial nephrectomy**, often called kidney-sparing surgery, removes a tumour but leaves behind some healthy kidney tissue. This surgery saves some normal kidney function (some of the kidney can properly filter wastes and toxins from the blood).
- A **nephroureterectomy** is surgery that removes the entire kidney and the ureter.

## Why am I having a nephrectomy?

You may be having the kidney removed because:

- you have a tumour that is benign (not cancer) or malignant (cancer)
- your kidney does not work
- your kidney will be used in a transplant

## What happens before my surgery?

- You have a virtual appointment scheduled with the Pre-Admission Clinic. This appointment is not in person. You speak with your health care team over the phone, including the nurse, anesthetist and pharmacist.
  - The nurse does an in-depth health assessment.
  - The anesthetist reviews your medical history.
  - The pharmacist reviews your current medications.

## Tests to do before your surgery

You will need to come to the hospital to do some tests before your surgery.

- We test your blood, do an ECG (electrocardiogram – a record of your heart's electrical activity) and/or a chest x-ray.

## What to do the day before my surgery

- The evening before your surgery, **drink clear fluids only**.
- After midnight the night before your surgery, don't eat or drink anything. **Your stomach has to be empty for the surgery.**
- You may need to take a laxative if prescribed by your surgeon.

## On the morning of my surgery

**If you are having surgery at Toronto General Hospital, arrive 2 hours before** your scheduled surgery at:

Toronto General Hospital, 200 Elizabeth Street  
Surgical Admission Unit (SAU)  
Peter Munk Building – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**If you are having surgery at Toronto Western Hospital, arrive 2 hours before** your scheduled surgery at:

Toronto Western Hospital, 399 Bathurst Street  
Surgical Admission Unit  
East Wing – 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

- A nurse prepares you for surgery. We 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 fluids, antibiotics and pain medicine.

## What to expect after the surgery

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

You will be attached to some tubes when you wake up:

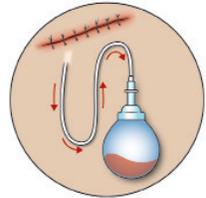
### IV line

A tube used to give you fluids and medicines. It is taken out when you can drink again comfortably.



### JP drain (Jackson Pratt drain)

If you had a partial nephrectomy or a nephroureterectomy, we put a tube in your belly to drain any extra fluid. We remove it when the amount of fluid decreases and you no longer need it.



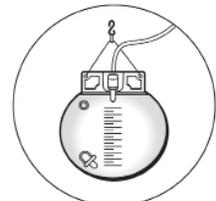
### Oxygen

We usually give patients oxygen while they are still in the PACU to help with breathing. We use nasal prongs or a clear plastic mask.



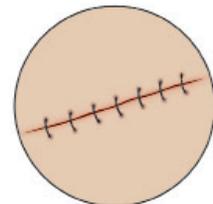
### Catheter

A tube that goes into your bladder to drain urine. It also helps us see how much urine your body is making. We usually take it out 1 or 2 days after your surgery.



### Staples

Regardless whether you had an open or robotic surgery, the staples along your incision line are taken out 10 to 14 days after your surgery.



## **How will I feel?**

It's normal to feel pain after surgery.

To help control the pain we give you either Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) or an epidural. PCA uses a pump that you control yourself. The anesthetist will speak to you about the options. We can give you more information about different kinds of pain relief.

After your surgery, you may start to have gas pain. The best thing to do is walk and move your body to relieve the pain.

You may feel nausea or dizziness because of the pain medicine. We will give you medicine that can help.

## **How do I take care of myself after surgery?**

- Try to walk the first day after your surgery. A nurse will help you.
- Start deep breathing, coughing and Incentive Spirometry exercises. A nurse will help you.
- Wiggle your toes while you are in bed. This helps blood flow in your legs.
- Take showers instead of baths. A nurse will help you shower while you are in hospital.

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

You can usually go home in 2 to 5 days, depending on the type of surgery you had.

## How do I take care of myself when I leave the hospital?

- You can go back to your everyday activities when you feel ready. If you are getting tired easily, listen to your body and don't push yourself.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 5 kilograms (10 lbs) for the **4 to 6 weeks** after your surgery. For example, don't lift heavy grocery bags, pets or small children.
- Don't drive for 2 weeks after your surgery.

## What if I am constipated?

To prevent constipation:

- eat foods that are high in fibre such as bran, fruit and vegetables
- drink lots of fluids. Drink about 8 glasses of water a day (each glass should be 8 ounces)
- if needed you can buy a mild laxative at a pharmacy without a prescription, such as Metamucil®, Prodiom or Milk of Magnesia

## When to call the Nursing Unit

Call the 10ES West Nursing Unit if you have:

- a fever (temperature higher than 38 °C or 101 °F) and/or you feel chills
- urine (pee) with blood in it that does not go away after you drink more fluids
- redness or pain where your incision is
- redness or pain where the ports are, if you had laparoscopic or robotic surgery
- redness or pain where the incision is, if you had an open nephrectomy



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

## When is my follow-up appointment?

You will visit your urologist 6 weeks after the surgery.

If you have donated a kidney, you will also have to make an appointment to see your nephrologist (kidney specialist) for 3 months after the surgery.

## How to contact us

### Toronto General Hospital

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 10ES West Nursing Unit | 416 340 3521           |
| Dr. Finelli            | 416 946 2851           |
| Dr. Fleshner           | 416 946 2989           |
| Dr. Hamilton           | 416 946 2909           |
| Dr. Kulkarni           | 416 946 2246           |
| Dr. Perlis             | 437 533 0228           |
| Dr. Wallis             | 416 586 4800 ext. 3910 |
| Dr. Zlotta             | 416 586 4800 ext. 3910 |

### Toronto Western Hospital

|                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Combined Surgical Unit 6Fell | 416 603 5830 |
| Dr. Hassouna                 | 416 603 1961 |
| Dr. Radomski                 | 416 603 5713 |



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