

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 prior to your treatment so that we can tell exactly where your stone is and accurately direct the shockwaves on to it. During the treatment the stone will be monitored either by x-ray or ultrasound several times to ensure the shockwaves continue to be focused correctly. You may require more than one treatment 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.

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. We will give you a strong painkiller in suppository form (inserted into the back passage) half an hour before your treatment starts. You can phone us to discuss alternatives.

What should I expect afterwards?

Over the following 2-3 days you may experience some pain or discomfort as the stone fragments and small 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 and should be dealt with immediately. You should contact your own doctor in the first instance, as they will be nearby. 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 ask any of the. The Urology Procedures Department 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.

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