

Penile Cancer information sheet

Total penectomy

For further information on life after treatment,
please refer to Orchid's main booklet:
Penile Cancer; What you need to know.

ORCHID 
FIGHTING MALE CANCER

Orchid is dedicated to supporting men with a diagnosis of penile cancer. This information sheet describes a particular treatment men may have along with any special care and tips we think may be helpful.



Orchid has a
Male Cancer Helpline

manned by specialist nurses on

0808 802 0010

or email

helpline@orchid-cancer.org.uk

Total penectomy

This is an operation to remove the whole of the penis. The urethra will be surgically reshaped to form a special urinary drainage passage called a perineal urethrostomy. This will mean that men will need to sit down on a toilet to pass urine. The sensation or need to pass urine will not be affected and men will have control of urination.

It's very important that men discuss this surgery with their specialist healthcare team to ensure that they know exactly what to expect after the operation. If men feel that they may need counselling before or after the operation they should ask their specialist team to arrange this for them.

The operation is likely to take several hours to complete.

After surgery

- ▶ Painkillers will be given on a regular basis. It is important that painkillers are taken regularly as prescribed and not just when pain is felt.
 - ▶ The site of the operation will have a wound dressing over it which will also cover the scrotum. This will usually be removed after 2 - 3 days. Doctors and nurses will check the dressings and the wound site regularly. When men do resume normal bathing they should pat the wound dry with a clean towel or gauze and avoid any material that may leave fibres on the area.
 - ▶ Excess blood or fluid can sometimes gather at the operation site and a small plastic tube(s) called a wound drain(s) will be inserted during the operation. This will allow unwanted substances to drain naturally and healing to take place. The wound drain(s) will be usually be removed after 24 hours.
 - ▶ Men will need to take things easy for 4 - 6 weeks after surgery and avoid any strenuous activity such as heavy lifting/ shopping and gardening while the wound heals. They may need to wear anti-embolism stockings (anti blood clot stockings) to protect the circulation in their legs during and for some time after the operation. Blood thinning medication may also be administered.
- ▶ Stitches will be dissolvable but may take 4 - 6 weeks to fully dissolve.
 - ▶ A community nurse can visit men at home and check that the operation site remains clean and healthy.
 - ▶ Men will have a urinary catheter (urine drainage tube) which will usually need to remain in place for up to 14 days.
 - ▶ A minimum of 4 weeks off work will be needed after the operation.
 - ▶ An appointment will usually be made after a few weeks to check that the operation site is healing and to discuss the results of the operation and whether any further treatment may be needed.

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Tips for surgery

- ▶ Always ask the specialist exactly what the surgery will involve and what to expect after the operation.
- ▶ Plan ahead with regard to time off work and allowing for the healing process.
- ▶ Try and maximise health prior to the operation by eating good quality foods and taking steady exercise such as walking.

For further information on adjusting to life after total penectomy please see Orchid's main booklet *Penile Cancer; What you need to know*, discussing penile cancer.

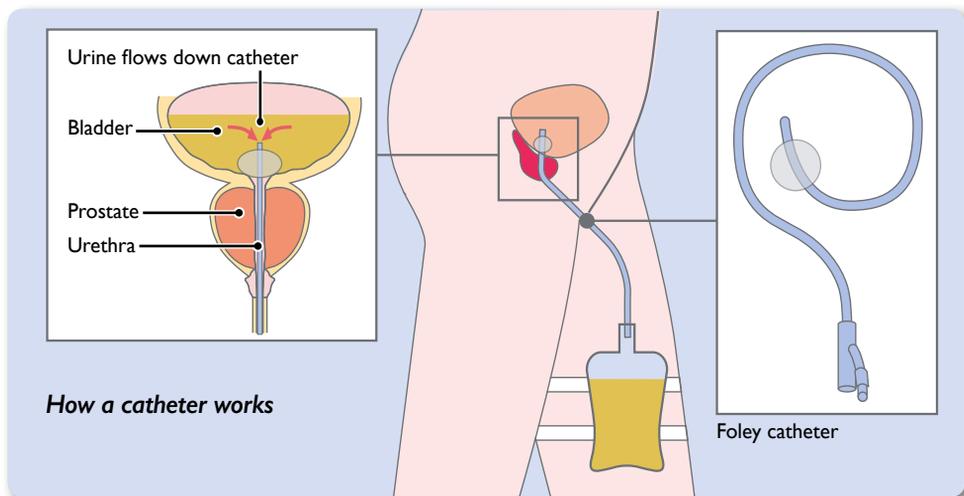
Catheters

A catheter is a plastic tube that drains urine from the bladder. It will be connected to a leg drainage bag which can be left in place for up to a week. A bigger bag can be attached to the leg bag for drainage at night.

The catheter is held inside the bladder by a small balloon that is inflated with sterile water following insertion. It will therefore not usually come out unless properly removed by deflating the balloon. The balloon tends to rest over a sensitive area of nerves in the bladder which may be affected by its presence and these nerves are connected to nerves in the penile area. This irritation may make a man feel as if he needs to pass urine urgently and sometimes force a small amount of urine from around the catheter. Using a strap or tape to fix the join of the catheter to

the thigh or top of the leg to prevent it from pulling or dragging may be of help.

- ▶ Men should clean around the operation site as instructed by the specialist team and should avoid any toiletries which may cause skin irritation and delay the healing process.
- ▶ The catheter should not be pulled or tugged.
- ▶ It is very important to drink 2 - 3 litres of fluid daily to flush the urine through and water based drinks tend to prevent bacteria forming which will help prevent urinary infection.
- ▶ When emptying or connecting catheter bags, hands should always be washed thoroughly with soap and water before and after the procedure.



Men should seek medical advice from their healthcare team if they experience:

- ▶ Persistent bleeding from the operation site.
- ▶ Swelling, redness or a foul smelling discharge at the operation site.
- ▶ Uncontrolled pain.
- ▶ Difficulty in passing urine.
- ▶ A high temperature and shaking or feeling as if a bad cold is present which could be a sign of infection.

**PLEASE REFER TO ORCHID'S BOOKLET
PENILE CANCER; WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
FOR FURTHER ADVICE AND ADJUSTING TO LIFE AFTER SURGERY**

Important contact numbers

Specialist Nurse contact no.:

District Nurse contact no.:

Men always need to make sure that the contact details of the specialist team are at hand should they need to contact them prior to follow-up appointments.

Resources...

For further information and support on male cancer, please visit the Orchid website at www.orchid-cancer.org.uk

Orchid has produced a series of leaflets and factsheets on specific issues relating to male cancer which can be downloaded from the website.

Low-down, Orchid's newsletter, features the latest news and developments in male cancer including research, treatments, new services and events.

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Written and edited by:

Orchid Cancer Appeal and
Orchid Editorial Board

March 2019

To be reviewed 2020

References to sources of information used in this booklet are available from Orchid. If you would like to comment on the information included in the booklet or make suggestions about future editions Orchid would like to hear your feedback.

Orchid is the UK's leading charity dedicated to supporting men and their families who are affected by male-specific cancers: testicular, prostate and penile.

Established in 1996 by a young testicular cancer patient and the oncologist who saved his life, Orchid works to improve the lives of people affected by male cancers through a world class research programme, educational campaigns and raising awareness and an extensive support service.

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