

Percutaneous nephrostomy

Patient information factsheet

What is a percutaneous nephrostomy

A percutaneous nephrostomy is a small tube that is put into your kidney to drain urine (pee).

- The tube is placed through the skin of your back, just below the ribs.
- One end of the tube sits inside your kidney.
- The other end stays outside your body and is connected to a drainage bag.
- Urine drains from your kidney into the bag.

Why do I need a nephrostomy?

- You may need a nephrostomy if urine cannot drain normally from your kidney.
- This can happen if there is a blockage in:
 - The tubes between the kidney and bladder (ureters), or
 - The tube that carries urine out of the body (urethra).
- If urine cannot drain:
 - The kidney can swell.
 - The kidney can be damaged.
 - There is a risk of infection.
- A nephrostomy allows urine to drain safely and reduces pressure on the kidney.
- If only one kidney is blocked, you will usually need one nephrostomy.
- If both kidneys are blocked, you may need one on each side.
- The nephrostomy may be short-term or long-term. It depends on the cause.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- The procedure is usually done under local anaesthetic, which means you will be awake, but the area will be numb.
- You may also be given medicine to help you relax.

- Before the procedure:
 - You may need blood tests.
 - You may be asked not to eat for up to 6 hours before the procedure.
 - You may still be able to drink clear fluids.
- Your Doctor or Nurse will explain what you need to do. Please ask if anything is unclear.

What happens during the procedure?

- You will change into a hospital gown.
- A small tube (cannula) will be placed into a vein in your arm so that medicines can be given.
- Your blood pressure, pulse and temperature will be checked.
- You will lie on your front on a special table.
- The procedure is done in an Interventional Radiology (IR) department using X-ray and ultrasound.
- The skin on your back will be:
 - Cleaned with antiseptic
 - Covered with sterile drapes
 - Numbed with local anaesthetic
- Using ultrasound and X-ray guidance:
 - A needle is passed into the kidney
 - A thin wire is placed
 - The nephrostomy tube is guided into position
- A small amount of contrast dye may be used to check the tube is in the right place.
- The tube is then secured and connected to a drainage bag.

Who does the procedure?

- The procedure is carried out by an Interventional Radiologist.
- This is a Doctor who specialises in procedures guided by imaging such as X-rays and ultrasound.

What are the possible risks?

- This is a common and generally safe procedure. However, all procedures have some risks.

- Possible risks include:
 - You may have some pain or discomfort. Pain relief will be given if needed.
 - It is common for urine to be blood-stained for 1 to 2 days. This usually settles on its own.
 - Infection can occur and may need antibiotics.
 - The tube can block or move and may need replacing.
 - Sometimes the tube cannot be placed. If this happens, you may need a different procedure.
 - Allergic reactions are uncommon and are treated quickly.
 - X-rays are used, but the dose is kept as low as possible.
- Your Doctor will only suggest this procedure if it helps you more than it could harm you.

What happens after the procedure?

- You will be monitored until you have recovered.
- Pain relief will be given if needed.
- You may go home or return to the ward, depending on your condition.
- There is no fixed time for how long the nephrostomy will stay in place.
- If needed long-term, it is usually changed every about 3 months.
- Further treatment may be planned to treat the blockage.
- Your care will be managed by the urology team.

Contact our service

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your Doctor, Nurse or the radiology team.

For questions about your appointment at the Imaging Department please contact us on 020 7288 5888 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm).

For any other questions, please contact the Urology Patient Pathway Co-ordinator on 020 7288 5221 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm).

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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