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Ureteral Stent

What is a ureteral stent?

A stent is a soft, thin flexible tube that helps urine drain from the kidney to the bladder. It is placed in the ureter and is held in place by curls (like pig-tails) on each end. The stent is a hollow tube with holes throughout that allows urine to drain around and through it.

Why is a ureteral stent placed?

A stent is placed to relieve any blockage of urine flow from the kidney to the bladder. It is commonly placed to temporarily relieve blockage caused by a kidney stone. After some kidney stone surgeries, a stent is used to allow postoperative stone fragments to flush out of the kidney. If you have had ureteroscopy (a look up the ureter) the stent will allow the ureter to remain open while the normal postoperative swelling of the ureter resolves. A stent is also sometimes used to help allow the kidney and/or ureter to heal after certain surgeries.

Will I feel the stent?

Ureteral stents can cause discomfort and even be painful for some individuals. Feelings of pressure in the bladder, having to urinate more often or more urgently, and discomfort in the side or back when urinating can all commonly occur. It is also common to see blood in the urine when you have a ureteral stent. For most these feelings are mild. Your urologist may prescribe medications that can help minimize some of these feelings.

How and when is the stent removed?

Your urologist will tell you when it is appropriate for your stent to be removed. This often depends on why it was placed and your specific clinical situation. Removing the stent only requires a short office procedure for most individuals. A lubricant with local anesthetic is injected in your urethra and a small flexible lighted telescope is used to look into the bladder. Small tweezers are then used to grasp the stent and withdraw it completely from your body. This only takes, at most, a few minutes. Most people experience only slight discomfort or a pinching sensation as this is done.

