

Preparing for Your Prostatectomy

Before Your Surgery

- You will meet with _____ to schedule your surgery date and time.
- To reduce the chance of an infection, it is important to wash your body with a special soap before your surgery. You will need to wash your skin with a soap called 4% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) from the neck down the night before your surgery and the morning of your surgery. It is okay to wash your genitals with 4% CHG soap. For more information, see the patient education handout [Getting Your Skin Ready for Surgery - The James](#).
- Prostate surgery can weaken the muscles that help you control the flow of urine. This can lead to a problem called urinary incontinence or lack of bladder control. **Kegel exercises**, also known as pelvic floor exercises, can help make the muscles of the bladder opening stronger to give you better control of your urine flow after surgery. You will need to do Kegel exercises before and after surgery. See the patient education handout [Kegel or Pelvic Floor Muscles Exercises for Men](#) for more information.
- Only take the medicines your surgeon or anesthesiologist told you to take by mouth the morning of your surgery. You may brush your teeth, but do not swallow the water. It is important to have an empty stomach before surgery.

During Your Surgery

- You will be asleep for the procedure. The surgery usually takes about 2 to 4 hours. Your family will be given updates on how you are doing.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

After Surgery

- You will stay 1 night in the hospital and should plan to be off work for about **4 to 6 weeks**.
- You will be up and out of bed to walk within 4 hours after your surgery.
- You will go home with a urinary catheter (Foley) in your bladder to drain and collect urine. The catheter is put through the urinary opening and into your bladder. It is held in place with a small balloon filled with water. The catheter connects to a drainage bag which collects the urine. The bag must be kept below your waist to drain the urine and prevent a urinary tract infection. You will need to clean and empty this bag at home. It is normal for the catheter to leak where the tube is inserted. The catheter will be removed at your follow up appointment about 1 week after surgery.
- Problems such as bloating and gas are normal after surgery. Gas pains may travel from your belly to other areas of the body. A common place for air to travel is up to the shoulder, which may cause shoulder pain.
- To help with constipation, take stool softeners as directed. Try to drink 2 liters of fluids each day, eat smaller and more frequent meals, and walk as much as possible.
- It is normal for your scrotum to swell and get larger after surgery. Sometimes the scrotum can swell up to the size of a grapefruit. This swelling may last for several weeks. Wear snug-fitting underwear for support or use a small towel to hold up your scrotum when sitting or lying down. You may also have some bruising on your scrotum.
- It takes time to regain the ability to have an erection after a prostatectomy. During surgery, the nerves to the penis are disturbed and can be injured. These nerves need time to heal after surgery. The amount of time needed to recover sexual function is different for each person. If you were having erectile problems before surgery it will not be improved. The James has an ED rehabilitation program to help with this problem.
- You will need to limit some activities after surgery. Do not lift, push, or pull objects over 3 pounds for at least 1 week after surgery. Do not lift, push, or pull objects over 10 pounds for at least 6 weeks after surgery.
- You may develop bruising across your abdomen after you return home. This is normal and will go away within a few weeks.

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When to call the doctor?

Call the Urology Department at 614-685-4263 if you have any of the following problems:

- No urine output for 3 to 4 hours
- If your pain is not controlled by pain medicine
- Urine has a foul odor
- Increased amount of blood in or around the urinary catheter
- A fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- The catheter accidentally comes out
- No bowel movement in 7 days
- Severe pain in your penis and or scrotum