



# Ureteroscopy

Urological health

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Ureteroscopy Video

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Ureteroscopy lets your urologist see into your kidneys to inspect and treat various problems that affect the body's drainage system.

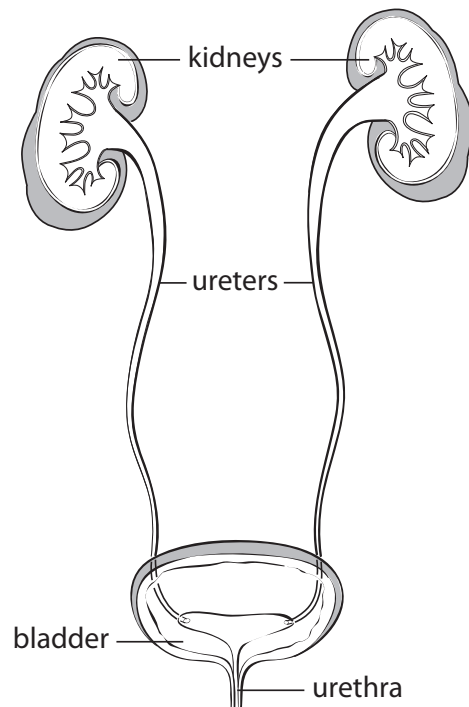
## What is ureteroscopy?

- Ureteroscopy is a surgery that uses a ureteroscope to inspect and treat problems that may be coming from the kidney or ureter.
- The ureters are tubes that empty urine from each kidney into the bladder. (See diagram: *Front view of kidneys, ureters, and bladder*)
- If the ureters or kidneys are blocked (such as with kidney stones, a tumor, or cancer), or there are other problems, your urologist will need to see inside the ureter or kidneys.
- A ureteroscope is like a long narrow telescope with a lens at one end, a tube in the middle, and another lens and light at the other end. It passes through the urethra (the tube that drains urine) and bladder to the kidney. (See diagram: *Front view of kidneys, ureters, and bladder*)
- Very often, ureteroscopy is used to remove a stone from the kidney or ureter.
- Ureteroscopy may also be used to look for causes of abnormal bleeding or blockages in the ureter.

## What should I know about the surgery?

- Anesthesia is used to prevent pain during surgery. Two main types are used in ureteroscopy:
  1. General anesthetic (putting you completely to sleep) is used most often.
  2. Spinal anesthetic ("freezing" you from the waist down with a needle in your back) is used less often.
- Once you have received the anesthetic, your legs will be elevated, spread, and supported.
- The ureteroscope is then inserted.
- X-rays are taken during the surgery.
- To remove a kidney stone, it is often trapped in a wire "basket" and carefully pulled out.

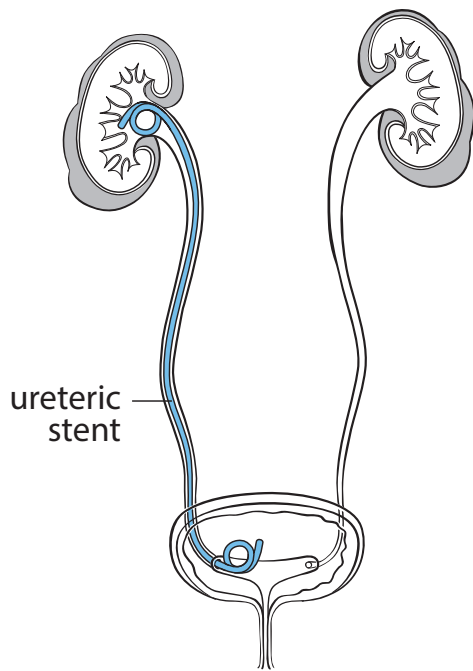
Front view of kidneys, ureters and bladder



- For larger stones, other tools may be used such as laser or ultrasound.
  - These tools can break up larger stones so that you can pass them more easily from your body or they can be removed more easily during surgery.
  - It is important to know that these specialized tools may not be available at all hospitals.
- After the surgery, a thin plastic tube (called a ureteric stent; see diagram: *Ureteric stent from kidney to bladder*) may be placed in the ureter to prevent any blockage that may happen because of swelling.
- This stent is not permanent. It will be removed when the swelling goes down, usually within a few days or weeks. It is also important to know that it might be kept in place for several months.

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### Ureteric stent from kidney to bladder



### What do I have to do when I go home?

- Most patients can leave the hospital the same day but cannot drive themselves home. They need a ride.
- For a few days after the ureteroscopy:
  - You may feel burning when you urinate.
  - You may see blood or small clots in your urine.
- These symptoms are often caused by the tools used in surgery.
- Drinking plenty of fluids (water as much as you can) and emptying your bladder often can help.
- If you had stones removed, you may see small pieces of stone in your urine.
- Within a few days, you should be able to do all of your usual activities. Ask your doctor for advice on this.

### Are there side effects from ureteroscopy?

- There is a small risk of infection, which may need to be treated with antibiotics.
- Sometimes, the ureteroscopy may cause abnormal scarring. You may need to have extra surgery to fix any problem.
- An ache or pain in the kidney or bladder is common for several days after ureteroscopy.
  - Usually, a mild pain reliever such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol™) or anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil™) will help with this.
  - Very seldom, patients have more severe pain or high fever and should go to the emergency department at the hospital.

### What happens after the surgery?

- You may need to make a followup appointment with your doctor to go over the results of the ureteroscopy.
- Depending on the results, you may need more tests or a change in your treatments.
- If you have a ureteric stent, you will be told how and when it will be removed.
- If a stone was removed, your doctor may suggest getting an Xray or ultrasound after the stent has been removed.

### Will I have symptoms when I have a ureteric stent?

- Some patients don't notice a difference with a stent in place. Others may have some of the following symptoms which are like those after the ureteroscopy.
  - It is not unusual to have some bladder ache or pain, especially when urinating.
  - You may feel that you must urinate immediately when you get the urge, or urinate more often.
  - You may see small amounts of blood in your urine.
  - You may pass small blood clots.
  - You may have mild back ache when you urinate. This is not harmful. It is related to backflow of urine toward the kidney through the stent (urine usually moves from kidney to bladder, not bladder to kidney). This happens when urine bypasses the special one-way valve that normally stops such backflow.

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- It may seem that these symptoms get worse when you are physically active, because the stent may irritate the bladder. You may need to limit vigorous physical activity while the ureteric stent is in place.
- These symptoms will disappear when the stent is removed.
- Some stents have a thread attached that hangs out of the urethra and may be taped to your penis or abdomen. This thread lets your doctor pull on the stent when it is ready to be taken out.

#### What's the bottom line?

- Ureteroscopy is a surgery that lets your urologist inspect and treat problems that may be coming from the kidney or ureters.
- After a ureteroscopy, most patients can return to their usual activities within a few days.
- You may need a followup appointment with your urologist to discuss the results of the ureteroscopy and any next steps.

## Followup

Date of ureteroscopy: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please contact your urologist's office within the next week to arrange for a follow-up appointment in \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/months.

or

☐ Your follow-up appointment has been arranged for \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_\_ (location)

*This publication is produced by*

Canadian **U**rological Association  
The Voice of Urology in **Canada**



Association des **U**rologues du Canada  
La voix de l'urologie au **Canada**

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