

## Nephrectomy

A nephrectomy is the removal of a kidney. This may be done to remove a kidney tumor or a non-working kidney. In some cases, a partial nephrectomy (removal of part of the kidney) may be done. The surgery can be done through an open incision (open nephrectomy) or through several small incisions (laparoscopic nephrectomy).

### The Day Before Surgery

- Eat a light breakfast and lunch, avoid greasy foods and red meat.
- Drink only clear liquids after lunch up to midnight (no limit on amount):
  - Water
  - Broth
  - Juice without pulp (apple, cranberry, grape)
  - Hard Candy
  - Clear Jell-O®
  - Sparkling water or soda
  - Weak coffee or tea, no creamer
  - Gatorade® or other sport-type drink
  - Boost Breeze® or Resource
- At 2:00 pm drink 10 oz. of Magnesium Citrate. You may drink as much clear liquid as you wish until midnight. Please drink 1 liter of a sport-type drink with electrolytes (Gatorade®) before midnight. Shower before bed with antibacterial soap as instructed.

### After Surgery

- It is normal for you to have some pain in the surgical area for 2 to 4 weeks. Pain pills will be ordered for you. Follow the directions for using these pills.

- You will be walking soon after your surgery. This is very important to your recovery. The pain pills will make it easier for you to move around.
- You will be in the hospital 3-5 days.

### Activity

- Do not lift more than 15 – 20 pounds for 4 weeks.
- Nothing strenuous until approved by your doctor.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of fluid per day (any kind of fluid is OK; not alcohol).
- You may shower. Do not soak your incisions in a hot tub or bathtub until they are healed, at least 2 weeks. You may wear Band-Aids® if you need to. Wear Band-Aids® if your incisions are in a skin fold, your clothes rub on them, or they are draining. Change them at least daily and more often if they get wet or soiled.
- Resume sexual activity when you feel ready.
- Do not drive for 2 weeks.
- The length of time you will need to be off work depends on your recovery and the type of work you do. Check with your surgeon before going back to work.

### Follow-Up

Your first follow-up visit will be made for you before you leave the hospital.

**When to Call**

- Shortness or breath or chest pain, call 911.
- Incision becomes red, tender, or swollen.
- Pus-like drainage from the incision or drain site.
- Temperature over 100.5° F for two consecutive readings taken 4 hours apart.
- Decrease in urine output.
- Bloody urine.

**Who to Call**

UW Health Urology  
**(608) 263-4757**

UW Health at The American Center  
Urology  
**(608) 440-6464**

UW Health One South Park Urology  
**(608) 287-2900**

After hours, weekends, and holidays, the clinic number is answered by the paging operator. Ask for the Urology Doctor on call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

Toll Free: **1-844-607-4800**

Your medical record number:

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Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2023. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4415