Nephrostomy

Radiology Service

Information for patients

What is a Nephrostomy?
A nephrostomy is a procedure performed under x-ray guidance to examine the kidneys for any narrowings or blockages. If a narrowing or blockage is observed, a thin plastic drain tube will be inserted to drain the urine blocked in the kidneys.

What to Bring:
Bring any relevant imaging scans (film packet or a CD containing X-rays, CT scans, ultrasound or MRIs etc.)

Preparation:
You will be required to have a blood test prior to your procedure to check your kidney function and blood clotting levels.

Tell staff at the time of booking and when you attend your procedure if you have any allergies, have had a previous reaction to an x-ray dye or if you have kidney disease. This ensures that the appropriate measures are taken to carry out the procedure with maximum safety.

Eating/ drinking:
You will be required not to eat or drink for 4 hours prior to your procedure.

Medications:
Tell staff at the time of booking if you are taking any:

- Blood thinning medications (e.g. Warfarin, Xarelto, Rivaroxaban, Pradaxa, Apixaban, Eliquis),
- Antiplatelet medications (e.g. Clopidogrel, Plavix, Aspirin)
- Diabetic medication containing metformin.

You will be informed if you need to stop taking these medications before your procedure.

Continue taking other medications as prescribed, unless directed otherwise by medical or nursing staff prior to your procedure.

Please bring a list of all your medications with you to your appointment.

Procedure:
On arrival to the hospital a nurse will discuss with you your medical history and insert a small plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in your hand or arm.

The doctor will explain the procedure and discuss with you the potential risks and you will be asked to sign a consent form.
During the procedure you will be lying on your stomach on a bed in the angiography room. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored during the procedure by nursing staff.

Your lower back will be cleaned with an antiseptic wash, and local anaesthetic will be used to numb a small section of skin on your lower back. A small incision will be made and a small needle will be inserted through the numb patch of skin into your kidney. The doctor will inject some contrast dye through the needle and take x-ray images to examine your kidney for any narrowings or blockages. If a narrowing or blockage is observed, a thin plastic drain tube will be placed to drain the blocked urine.

The drain tube will be secured with a dressing and will remain in place to drain until it is no longer required. Your treating team will discuss this with you.

Post Procedure Care:
You will return to your ward for the duration of your recovery where you will be monitored by nursing staff.

Discharge:
Your doctor will discuss discharge arrangements with you depending on the treatment you have had.

A future procedure will be required to remove the nephrostomy drain tube once it is deemed no longer necessary by your medical team.

Results:
The results together with the procedure report will be sent to your referring doctor.
Return to your doctor to discuss examination results.

Radiation Risk
Most medical imaging tests, except MRI and ultrasound, involve exposure to radiation from X-rays. Your doctor considers that the benefits of the examination you require to be greater than the small risk posed by the radiation exposure.

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References
Inside Radiology: www.insideradiology.com.au
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®

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