

The Hospital Stay

(The following information is based on the general experiences of many prostate cancer patients. Your experience may be different.)

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What Will I Learn By Reading This?

You and your doctor have decided that you will have surgery as a treatment for your prostate cancer. It is important for you to learn about prostate cancer surgery so that you will know what to expect during your surgery. In this booklet, you will learn about the following:

- What will happen the day you have your surgery
- What to expect when you have surgery
- What will happen when you are ready to leave the hospital

It is important to know what will happen at the hospital so that you will be able to get ready for your treatment.

Words that appear in **bold** (dark text) can be found in the “Key Words” section at the end of this booklet.

What Will Happen The Day I Have My Operation?

When You Get To The Hospital

1. When you get to the hospital, a member of the hospital staff will greet you and take care of any paperwork that was not done ahead of time. Make sure that you have your IMPACT card and picture identification such as a driver's license with you.



- Remember to bring the best phone number to reach a family member or friend in case the hospital needs to reach them. You may also want to bring the name and phone number of your nurse case manager with you.
2. The staff will show your family member or friend where to wait during your surgery.
 3. Ask about anything that you do not understand or that worries you.

Getting Ready To Go To The Hospital

- **What transportation plans will you make to get to the hospital? If you need help, speak with your nurse case manager (1-800-409-8252).**

- **What type of identification do you need to bring with you to the hospital?**

- **You will be in the hospital for 2 to 3 days. What personal items do you need to bring with you? For example, deodorant, razor, after-shave, slippers.**

Before Your Operation

1. A hospital staff member will get you ready for your operation by bringing you to a room where you will change into a hospital gown. At this time, you will be asked to remove your glasses, any jewelry you are wearing, and your dentures, if you wear them. Any personal items you brought with you to the hospital, like your clothes and your money, will be taken from you at this time for safe keeping. The hospital staff will place these items in a safe place until your surgery is finished and you are moved into a regular hospital room. Once you are in a regular hospital room, the hospital staff will return your personal items to you. Remember not to bring a lot of money or jewelry with you. It is best to leave jewelry at home and let a family member hold on to your money.
2. An anesthesiologist will talk to you. An anesthesiologist is the doctor who gives you medicine to make you sleep during the surgery and who carefully watches you during the operation.
3. Ask the anesthesiologist about anything that you do not understand or that worries you.

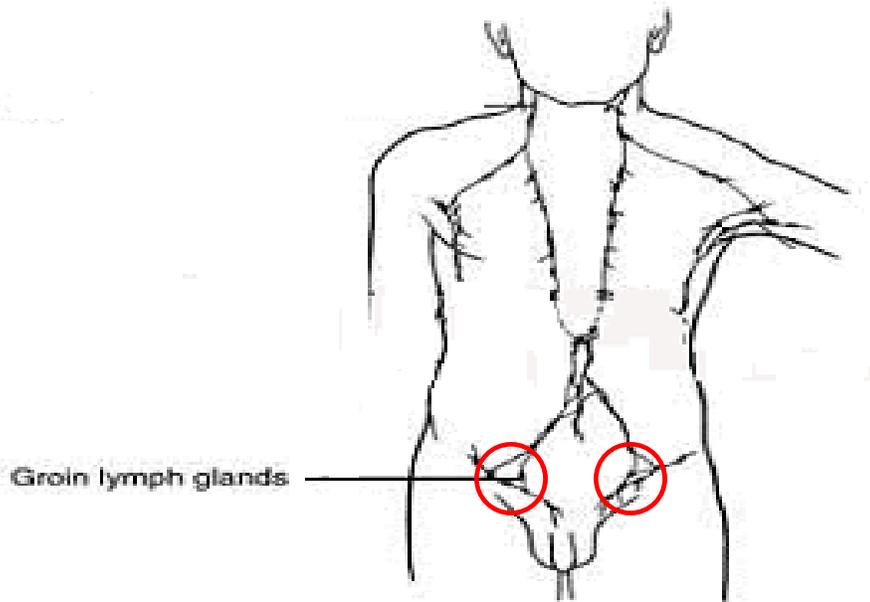
What Happens During The Surgery?

The operation will begin after you have been given general anesthesia. **General anesthesia** is when you are given medicine by your anesthesiologist to



make you sleep during the surgery. You will not feel anything during your surgery with general anesthesia. After you are asleep, your **surgeon** (the doctor who does the surgery) will make an opening, called an **incision**, in the lower part of your stomach below your bellybutton. Then your surgeon will remove your prostate gland. Your surgeon will also remove the lymph nodes around your prostate gland. Your lymph nodes will be checked to see if your cancer has spread to them. **Lymph nodes** are small glands that you have throughout your body that remove bacteria, as well as cancer cells, from your body. Sometimes cancer cells can get in the lymph nodes and move to other parts of the body through them.

See where your lymph nodes are found near your prostate.

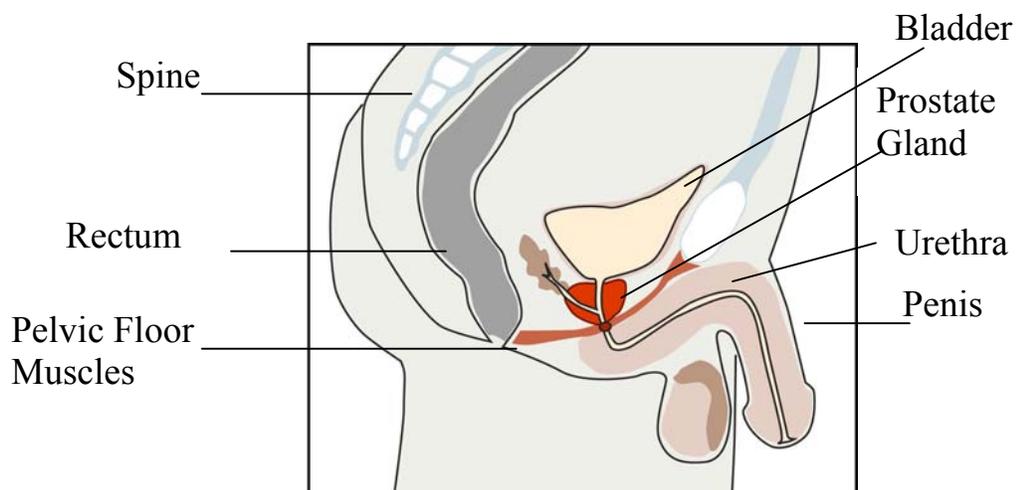


On each side of your prostate are small groups of nerves. It is the job of these nerves to make erections possible. If the cancer has not spread to these nerves, your surgeon will try to save them and leave them in place. This type of operation is called a “**nerve sparing surgery.**” Even if you have a nerve sparing surgery, there is still a chance that these nerves will not work as they should after your surgery. This means that you may not be able to have **erections** for awhile after your surgery. Sometimes it can take a year or longer after your operation before you have an erection. An erection is when your penis is hard enough to have **intercourse** (sex). If you had difficulty having erections before surgery, your erections will not be better after surgery. Some men find that even if they have nerve sparing surgery they are not able to have erections. After you have your

surgery, you will not have sperm to make a baby. After a prostatectomy, when you have sex, you will not have fluid (**ejaculate**) come from your penis like you did before your surgery. This is called **dry ejaculation**. If this is a concern for you and your partner, talk to your doctor or nurse case manager.

The surgery area is close to your **bladder** and your **urethra**, which is the tube in your body that carries urine out through your penis. The surgery may weaken the muscles that control your urine flow. This is why you may leak urine or lose small amounts of urine without wanting to after your surgery. It sometimes takes up to 12 months for a man to be able control his urine. Usually a man is able to control his urine at night first and then during the day. For many men this problem gets better with time.

The prostate gland wraps around your urethra like a donut.



After Your Operation

1. After your operation is over you will be taken on a stretcher to the recovery room. You will stay here until you are totally awake. This may take a few hours. The recovery room nurses will watch you very closely until you wake up.
2. After you wake up, you will move to a regular hospital room.



What You Will See After Your Surgery

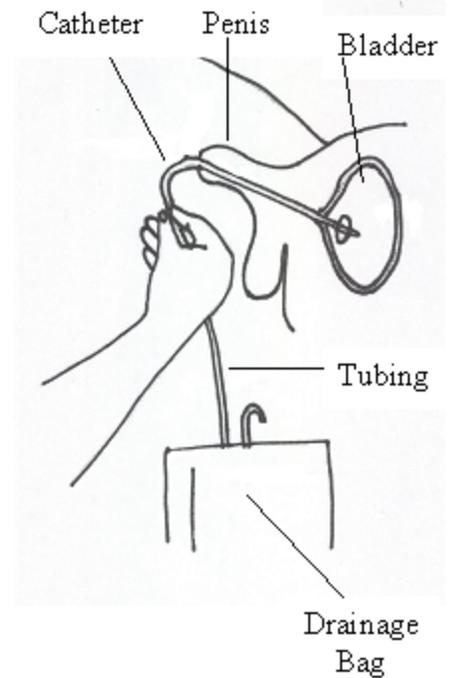
1. When you wake up from the general anesthesia, you will find a tube coming out of your penis. This tube is called a **catheter**.

The catheter is connected to a plastic drainage bag. The catheter drains urine from your bladder into the bag. It helps you heal from your operation. The catheter will stay in your penis for about 2 weeks. The nurse in the

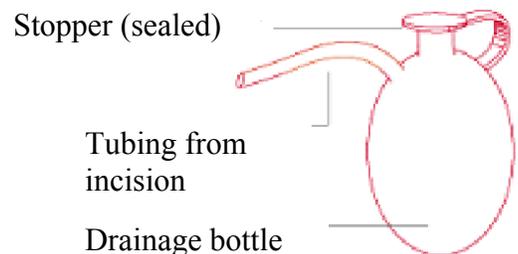
hospital will show you how to take care of the catheter before you leave the hospital.

2. Your surgical wound or **incision** made by the surgeon will be held together with staples or stitches until it heals. You may have a bandage over it. The stitches or staples will stay in when you go home. You will be told when to see your doctor to have them taken out. Or, you may have stitches that will dissolve on their own.

3. You will have a small, round plastic container attached to a little tube going into your body through a tiny hole on one side of your surgical wound. This



Picture of JP Drain

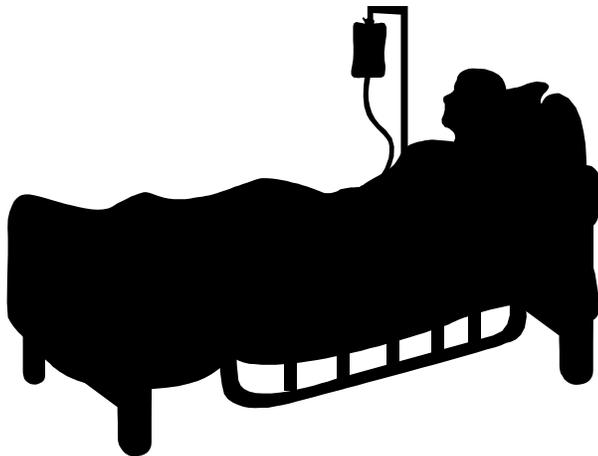
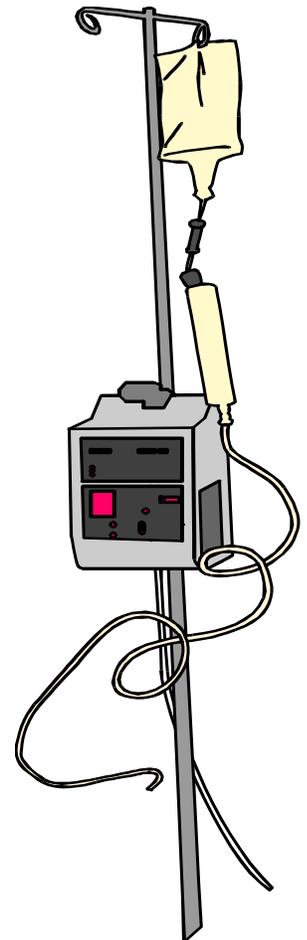


tube drains fluid from the area where you had your operation. This helps you heal. The drain is usually taken out before you go home. The drain is called a **Jackson-Pratt (JP drain)** or a **Penrose**.

Penrose Drain



4. You will have a plastic tube going into a vein in your arm. It is connected to a plastic bag of liquid. This is your **I.V.** The I.V. gives you any fluids you need. This is important since you cannot drink anything before your operation. You may also be given medicine in your I.V. Your I.V. will be taken out when you can drink and eat without problems.



Getting Back On Your Feet



1. The nurses in the hospital will check on you often to make sure you are OK. Make sure to tell the nurses how you are feeling and if you have pain. The nurses will give you medicine if you have pain. Remember, you will heal better if you are not in pain.
2. You will be able to sit in a chair and walk with someone's help, within a day of your operation.
3. You will be given liquids or soft foods when you first start eating after your operation. Your doctor may change you back to your regular diet before you go home.
4. If you have any questions or worries, ask your doctor or your nurse case manager.

What Will Happen When You Are Ready To Leave The Hospital?

A nurse at the hospital will show you how to take care of yourself when you go home. Let your nurse know if you have not made arrangements for someone to help you when you go home. Ask about anything that you do not understand or that worries you. If you have any medical problems when you get home, call your doctor immediately. Your nurse case manager will call you during the first two or three days after you get home to check on you.

Getting Home

- **What transportation plans will you make to get home? If you need help, speak with your nurse case manager (1-800-409-8252).**

- **Who will help you when you get home? Write down their names and how to get in touch with them.**

- **How will you get in touch with your doctor if you need to speak with him or her during the week, in the evening, on weekends?**

What Have I Learned By Reading This?

In this booklet, you learned about your hospital stay so that you will know what to expect during your prostate cancer treatment. You learned:

- What will happen the day you have your surgery,
- What to expect when you have surgery,
- What will happen when you are ready to leave the hospital.

If you have any questions, please talk to your doctor or nurse case manager. It is important that you understand what is going on with your treatment. This knowledge will help you take better care of yourself and feel more in control so that you can get the most from your treatment.

Key Words

Anesthesia: the medicine the doctor gives you that keeps you from feeling pain when you have surgery.

Anesthesiologist: a doctor who gives you medicine that numbs your body so that you do not feel pain when you have surgery. This doctor carefully watches you during an operation.

Bladder: the organ in your body, which holds your urine.

Catheter: the rubber tube placed in your body to drain urine from your bladder out through your penis.

Dry ejaculation: when no fluid (ejaculate) comes from your penis when you have sex.

Ejaculate: the fluid that comes from your penis when you have sex.

Erection: when your penis is hard enough to have intercourse (sex).

General anesthesia: medicine that makes you sleep during your operation so that you do not feel anything.

Incision: an opening the surgeon will make to perform the surgery.

I.V.: a plastic tube going into a vein in your arm which gives you any fluids or medicine you might need before, during, or after an operation.

Jackson-Pratt drain (also called a JP drain): a small, round tube that drains fluid from the area where you had your operation.

JP drain (also called a Jackson-Pratt drain): a small, round tube that drains fluid from the area where you had your operation.

Lymph nodes: small glands you have throughout your body that remove bacteria, as well as cancer cells, from your body.

Nerve sparing surgery: an operation that protects the nerves that are around the prostate gland.

Penrose drain: a small, round tube that drains fluid from the area where you had your operation.

Surgeon: the doctor who does the surgery.

Urethra: the tube in your body that carries urine out through your penis.