

Women's Services Patient Information

Urethral Bulking Agents

You have been found to have stress incontinence. The condition is characterised by the leakage of urine when you cough, sneeze or undertake physical activity. It is usually caused by a weakness of the muscles around the urethra (the tube which urine passes through from the bladder).

This occurs most commonly following childbirth, although a chronic cough, being overweight and growing older can also contribute.

One of the ways stress incontinence can be treated is by Urethral Bulking Agents. These are injections into the tissue around the urethra to help support it. The procedure does not require any cuts as it is carried out using a telescope and camera, which is passed through the urethra. This is done either under general anaesthesia (where you will be asleep) or local anaesthesia (where the area is numbed with local anaesthetic gel) and will be performed in the operating theatre.

This procedure can often be performed as a day case but you may need to stay overnight in hospital if you have any health problems or any complications following the operation. This will be discussed when you attend the pre-assessment clinic. You may experience some mild discomfort after the operation and pain relief will be given to relieve this.

You will be sent an appointment for review in clinic 3 months after the operation.

Complications

Some women experience difficulty in passing urine immediately after the procedure and may require a catheter (a tube that is inserted into your bladder via your urethra) to empty the bladder. It is very unusual to have this problem for more than 24 hours. Rarely, a urine infection could occur, which can be treated easily with antibiotics.

Success rate

About 70% of patients will be satisfied with the result. Sometimes a repeat injection is advised within a few months to get a better result. Some patients who are helped may require repeat injections or 'top-ups' some years later.

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