

Cystectomy

Cystectomy At Birmingham Urology Centre

A cystectomy is a major surgical procedure to remove all or part of your bladder. This procedure is most commonly performed to treat bladder cancer but may also be necessary for other severe bladder conditions. At Birmingham Urology Centre, we specialise in cystectomy procedures, providing expert care tailored to your individual needs. Our team is committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes through the use of advanced surgical techniques and comprehensive post-operative support.

What Is A Cystectomy?

A cystectomy involves the removal of the bladder. Depending on your specific condition, your surgeon may recommend one of the following types of cystectomy:

- **Partial cystectomy:** Only a portion of your bladder is removed. This is typically an option when the cancer or abnormality is confined to one area of the bladder.
- **Radical cystectomy:** The entire bladder is removed. For men, this often includes the removal of the prostate and seminal vesicles. For women, it may involve the removal of the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and part of the vagina.
- **Extended radical cystectomy:** In addition to the bladder, this surgery may also remove nearby lymph nodes, parts of the urethra, or other organs affected by the cancer.

Why You Might Need A Cystectomy

Cystectomy is most commonly performed to treat bladder cancer, particularly muscle-invasive bladder cancer that has spread beyond the bladder lining. Other reasons you might need a cystectomy include:

- **Non-cancerous bladder conditions:** Severe interstitial cystitis, chronic inflammation, or other debilitating bladder conditions that have not responded to less invasive treatments.
- **Congenital abnormalities:** Rarely, cystectomy may be necessary to treat severe congenital bladder abnormalities.

What To Expect During The Procedure

A cystectomy is a major surgery that typically requires general anaesthesia. The procedure can be performed using different surgical techniques:

- **Open surgery:** Traditional surgery involving a single, large incision in the abdomen.
- **Laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery:** Minimally invasive surgery using several small incisions, a camera, and specialised instruments. This method generally offers a quicker recovery time and less post-operative pain.
- **Robotic-assisted surgery:** A type of laparoscopic surgery where the surgeon uses robotic

instruments to enhance precision.

Reconstructive Options After Cystectomy

After your bladder is removed, your surgeon will create a new way for urine to exit your body. The type of urinary diversion chosen will depend on your health, preference, and the extent of your surgery. Common reconstructive options include:

- **Ileal conduit (urostomy):** A small piece of your intestine is used to create a tube (conduit) that connects your ureters to an opening (stoma) in your abdomen, where urine is collected in an external bag.
- **Continent urinary reservoir:** A pouch made from a piece of your intestine is created inside your body to collect urine, which you drain several times a day using a catheter.
- **Neobladder reconstruction:** A new bladder is made from a piece of your intestine, allowing you to urinate normally through your urethra.

Recovery After Cystectomy

Recovery from a cystectomy can take several weeks or months, depending on the type of surgery and your overall health. Key aspects of your recovery include:

- **Hospital stay:** You will typically need to stay in the hospital for 7 to 14 days, depending on the type of surgery and your individual recovery progress.
- **Pain management:** Pain after surgery is managed with medications, which may include oral pain relief or, in some cases, an epidural or nerve block.
- **Activity:** You will be encouraged to start moving as soon as possible to aid recovery, but you should avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activities for several weeks.
- **Follow-up care:** Regular follow-up appointments are essential to monitor your recovery, manage any complications, and check for signs of cancer recurrence if your surgery was for bladder cancer.

Risks And Potential Complications

Like all major surgeries, cystectomy carries risks. These can include:

- **Infection:** As with any surgery, there is a risk of infection at the surgical site or in the urinary tract.
- **Bleeding:** Some bleeding is expected during and after surgery, but excessive bleeding may require further treatment.
- **Blood clots:** Prolonged bed rest after surgery can increase the risk of blood clots in the legs or lungs.
- **Damage to surrounding organs:** There is a small risk of accidental injury to nearby organs during surgery.
- **Urinary issues:** Depending on the type of urinary diversion, you may experience issues with urination, such as leakage or difficulty emptying the new bladder.
- **Sexual dysfunction:** For men, removal of the prostate and seminal vesicles can affect sexual

function. For women, removal of the uterus or part of the vagina can also impact sexual health.

Why Choose Birmingham Urology Centre

At Birmingham Urology Centre, we provide expert care for patients undergoing cystectomy. Our team of highly experienced urologists uses the latest surgical techniques and technology to ensure the best possible outcomes. We understand that cystectomy is a life-changing procedure, and we are committed to supporting you every step of the way—from pre-operative preparation to post-operative care and beyond.

Contact us

If you have been advised to undergo a cystectomy or want to learn more about your treatment options, contact Birmingham Urology Centre today. Our dedicated team is here to provide you with the highest standard of care and answer any questions you may have. Take the first step towards your recovery by scheduling a consultation with our experts.