

Shockwave Lithotripsy

What Is Shock Wave Lithotripsy (Swl)?

Shock wave lithotripsy (SWL) is a non-invasive medical procedure used to treat kidney stones that are too large to pass naturally. It employs high-energy shock waves to break the stones into smaller fragments that can be passed out of the body through urine.

How Does Swl Work?

- **Outpatient procedure:** SWL is typically performed as an outpatient procedure, meaning you can go home the same day.
- **Ultrasound or X-ray guidance:** The stone is located using ultrasound or X-ray imaging.
- **Shock waves:** High-energy shock waves are directed at the stone from outside the body. These shock waves break the stone into smaller pieces.
- **Natural passage:** Once the stone is broken into smaller fragments, these pieces can pass naturally through the urinary tract.

Advantages Of Swl

- **Non-invasive:** No incisions or invasive procedures are required.
- **Outpatient:** Usually does not require an overnight hospital stay.
- **Quick recovery:** Most patients can return to normal activities within a few days.

Who Is Suitable For Swl?

- **Stone size and location:** SWL is most effective for stones that are less than 2 cm in diameter and located in the kidney or upper ureter.
- **Patient health:** Ideal for patients who cannot undergo more invasive procedures due to health reasons.

Preparation For Swl

- **Consultation:** Discuss your medical history and any medications you are taking with your doctor.
- **Fasting:** You may be required to fast for a few hours before the procedure.
- **Medications:** Some medications may need to be paused or adjusted.

What To Expect During Swl

- **Anaesthetic:** You may receive a local anaesthetic or sedation to ensure comfort.
- **Positioning:** You will lie on a table, and the imaging device will locate the stone.
- **Shock waves:** A machine will generate shock waves that are focused on the stone. You may feel some mild discomfort.
- **Duration:** The procedure usually takes about 30-60 minutes.

After The Procedure

- **Recovery:** Most patients can go home the same day. Rest and avoid strenuous activities for a few days.
- **Pain management:** You may experience mild pain as the stone fragments pass. Pain relief medications may be prescribed.
- **Hydration:** Drink plenty of water to help flush out the stone fragments.
- **Follow-up:** A follow-up appointment will be scheduled to ensure the stone has been completely passed.

Risks And Considerations

- **Discomfort:** Mild pain or discomfort as stone fragments pass.
- **Infection:** Risk of urinary tract infection, which can be treated with antibiotics.
- **Incomplete treatment:** In some cases, not all stone fragments are passed, requiring additional treatment.
- **Bleeding:** Minor bleeding in the urine can occur but usually resolves on its own.

When To Seek Medical Advice

- **Severe pain:** If you experience severe pain that is not relieved by pain medication.
- **Fever or chills:** Signs of infection require immediate medical attention.
- **Difficulty urinating:** If you are unable to urinate or pass stone fragments.

Kidney stones are a common condition that can cause significant discomfort and complications if left untreated. Early diagnosis and appropriate management of kidney stones can prevent complications and improve outcomes.

Our Services

At Birmingham Urology Centre, our experienced urologists provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment for kidney stones. We use the latest diagnostic tools and techniques to ensure accurate diagnosis and effective treatment plans tailored to each patient's needs.

Contact us today to book an appointment or for more information on kidney stones and treatment options.