

Radical Prostatectomy



What is it?

This involves complete removal of the prostate, the seminal vesicles and part of the water pipe which runs through the prostate. The water pipe is then re-connected to the bladder. The lymph nodes are sometimes also removed.

What are the surgical options?

- Laparoscopic (key hole) or robotic
- Open

What does surgery involve?

The procedure will be performed under a general anaesthesia. You will either have a series of small incisions (laparoscopic/robotic) or a medium sized single incision. The prostate, seminal vesicles with/without the lymph nodes will all be removed. The bladder will then be re-joined to the water pipe. We will try to preserve the nerves which control your erections; however this is not always possible. A drain and catheter will be left in place. The drain is usually removed after 24-48 hours. The abdomen will be closed with dissolvable stitches.

How long will I be in hospital?

You will normally go home after 1-5 days.

What can I expect after discharge?

You will be discharged with a catheter (tube which drains the bladder). The catheter will remain in place for approximately 10 days to protect the new join between the bladder and the water pipe. It is important that if you have any problems with the catheter, it is only manipulated or changed by a prostate surgeon or a member of their team. The catheter may leak occasionally and you may notice a slight red tinge in your urine which is normal.

It is normal to experience swelling and pain around the stitches; this may require simple pain killers. In addition your bowels may not open for a few days but this can be managed by simply increasing your fibre or sometimes using gentle laxatives.

You should avoid heavy lifting for 6 weeks.

It's important that you start pelvic floor exercises prior to your surgery and resume these once your catheter has been removed. This is to reduce the risk of urinary leakage and may help with recovery of your erections.

You will be given injections to continue for 28 days after your surgery. This is to thin the blood and reduce the risk of getting clots in the legs.

What are the possible complications?

- No semen production during orgasm (therefore you will be unable to have children naturally)
- Erectile dysfunction
- Penile shortening
- Penile curvature
- Painful orgasm
- Leakage of urine during sexual intercourse
- Leakage of urine
- Incomplete cancer removal requiring further treatment
- Leakage of urine from new join between bladder and water pipe
- Scarring (called stricture) at new join
- Infection requiring antibiotics
- Collection of fluid from the lymph vessels which may require the re-insertion of a drain
- Need to convert to an open procedure
- Injury to nearby structures (rectum)