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FACTSHEET

URETEROSCOPY AND LASER LITHOTRIPSY

About the Procedure:

This treatment involves the use of a very small, fiber-optic instrument called a ureteroscope, which allows access to stones in the ureter or kidney. The ureteroscope allows your urologist to directly visualize the stone by progressing up the ureter via the bladder. No incisions are necessary but general anesthesia is used.

Once the stone is seen through the ureteroscope, a small, basket-like device can be used to grasp smaller stones and remove them. If a stone is too large to remove, a laser, spark-generating probe or air-driven (pneumatic) probe can be passed through a channel built into the ureteroscope and the stone can be fragmented.

A straightforward case is complete once the stone has been shattered appropriately. However, if extensive manipulation was required to reach and/or treat the stone, your urologist may choose to place a stent within the ureter to allow the post-operative swelling to subside.

Preparing for the Procedure:

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the procedure. You should take your usual medications as you normally would the morning of your procedure with a small sip of water only (avoid juice, milk, coffee, etc.).

Bring any copies of films or CDs of any radiology studies (X-rays or CT scans) with you on the day of your procedure.

Make arrangements for someone to drive you home on the day of your procedure.

After the Procedure:

Most patients will be discharged home on the day of their procedure without a catheter in their bladder. If your doctor has left a stent in your kidney, you may experience an increased urge to urinate, as well as increased frequency of urination. Additionally, some patients experience mild to moderate discomfort in their back or lower abdomen, especially during urination. Finally, some blood in the urine may appear after the procedure, as well as some burning with urination. These symptoms are normal and may last as long as you have the stent in your body. Your doctor may prescribe you medication to help lessen these symptoms, so it is important to take the medications prescribed to you. Increasing your fluid intake will also help dilute the urine and lessen these symptoms.

It is very important to follow up with your doctor to schedule to have the stent removed, as leaving the stent in for prolonged periods of time may lead to infections, further stone formation, and/or permanent kidney damage.