

Ureteric stents: frequently-asked questions

Why are stents inserted?

Ureteric stents are inserted for many reasons but the commonest indications are blockage of the ureter (the tube draining urine from the kidney to the bladder) or after an operation to treat a stone in the kidney or ureter.

A picture of a
ureteric stent



How are stents inserted?

Insertion of a ureteric stent is usually performed under a general anaesthetic. In most cases, in order to insert a stent, the surgeon will need to pass an instrument via the urethra (the water pipe leading to the bladder) and use X-ray control to ensure that the stent is correctly positioned. The procedure takes approximately 15 minutes to perform.

What should I expect afterwards?

Sometimes, when you wake up, there may be a small string coming out of your water pipe. This is attached to the stent, and allows it to be removed easily in the outpatient clinic. Do not pull this yourself, unless directed to by your doctor. You may find that, when you first pass urine, it stings or burns and is slightly bloodstained. You may also experience a desire to pass urine frequently and some discomfort in the lower part of your abdomen. Men can experience pain at the tip of the penis and some women develop symptoms similar to those of cystitis. These acute symptoms will, in most cases, settle within 24-48 hours, but can continue until the stent is removed. You may also see blood in the urine. Stents should not stay in for longer than 6 months usually. You must check with your doctor when your stent will be removed.

Some patients with ureteric stents develop pain in the kidney when they pass urine; this is quite common and is not a cause for concern.