

## Patient information factsheet

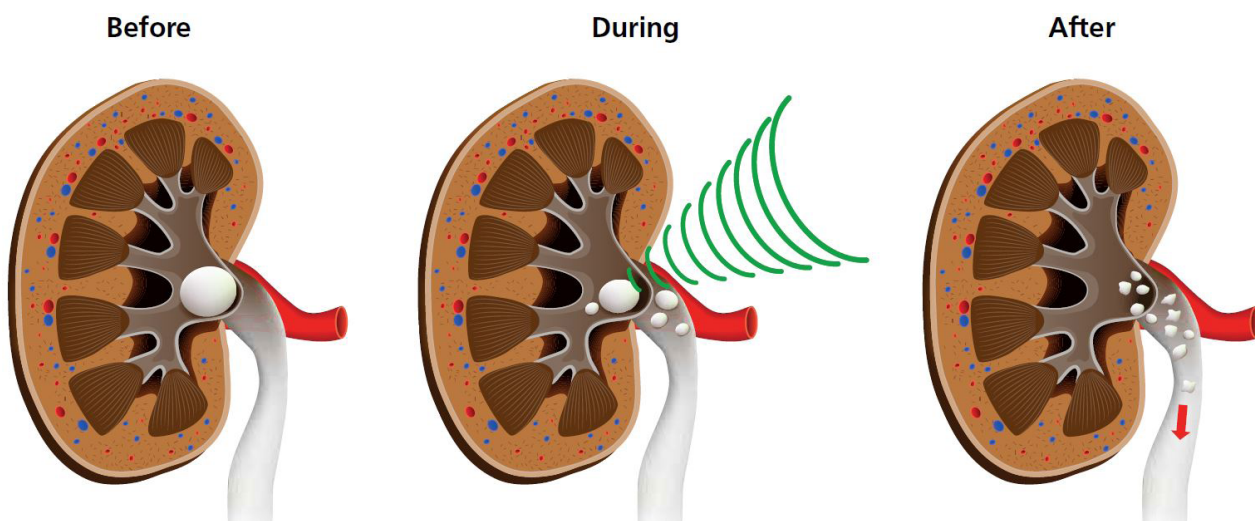
# SWL (shockwave lithotripsy) for kidney stones

We have given you this factsheet because you have been referred for a procedure called SWL (shockwave lithotripsy) to treat kidney stones (stone-like lumps that can form in one or both of the kidneys). This factsheet explains what SWL involves so that you know what to expect at your appointment. We hope it helps to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

### What is SWL?

SWL uses shockwaves (waves of energy), guided by ultrasound (high-frequency sound waves), to break kidney stones into small enough fragments to enable them to pass naturally in the urine.

The images below illustrate the stones before, during and after SWL treatment.



### Are there any alternatives?

There are several alternative treatment options to SWL, including:

- telescopic surgery (ureteroscopy)
- percutaneous (PCNL) surgery
- observation (waiting to see if the stones pass naturally in the urine by themselves)

Your urologist (specialist doctor) will have discussed these options with you at your clinic appointment.

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## How should I prepare for the procedure?

Contact us on **023 8120 8455** or **07747 250068** at **least two weeks** before your procedure if you:

- have any type of heart condition
- have an artificial heart valve, coronary artery stent, heart pacemaker/defibrillator or any other implanted foreign body
- have an artificial blood-vessel graft
- have a neurosurgical shunt
- have an artificial joint
- have or have had an MRSA infection
- are at high risk of variant CJD (for example, if you have received a corneal transplant, neurosurgical dural treatment or injections of human-derived growth hormone)
- have a known allergy to ciprofloxacin, trimethoprim, diclofenac or ibuprofen
- are or may be pregnant

## Tests and scans

Some people may need a blood test before their procedure. If this is the case, you can have this done at your GP surgery or at the hospital.

Some people may also need to have an x-ray to check the position of the stone/s. Your urologist will let you know whether you need to have a blood test and/or an x-ray. If you are unsure, please call us on the numbers above.

## Medicines

If you take any of the following blood-thinning medications, you must discuss this with your urologist. Your urologist will ask you to stop taking these five to ten days before your treatment:

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| • Aspirin     | • Dabigatran |
| • Clopidogrel | • Prasugrel  |
| • Warfarin    | • Ticagrelor |
| • Rivoxaban   | • Edoxaban   |
| • Apixaban    |              |

## Clothing

We will ask you to wear a hospital gown for this procedure. Please bring a **change of underwear** with you, as part of the procedure involves you lying in a puddle of water.

## What will happen before the procedure?

When you arrive at the urology centre (G level, Southampton General Hospital), we may ask you to provide a urine sample. If you have a urine infection, we will postpone your procedure and give you some antibiotics to take. If you don't have an infection, we will continue with the procedure.

We will offer you some pain relief medication. This will be in the form of tablets and/or a Voltarol suppository (medication that you insert into your bottom) that you will need to self-administer before your procedure.

## What will happen during the procedure?

The procedure will be performed by a lithotripsy technician (a specially trained healthcare professional) and a nurse.

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You will be awake during the procedure and we will monitor you throughout. We will identify your stone using ultrasound and/or x-ray guidance. Once identified, we will start the shockwave treatment. Please note that the treatment makes a loud clicking noise and is often said to feel like being flicked with a large elastic band.

## How long will it take?

The treatment will take about 40 minutes but you should be prepared to be in the department for up to two hours in total.

## Will it hurt?

This treatment can sometimes be uncomfortable, but most people tolerate it well. We will give you pain relief medication to help, if needed.

## What will happen after the procedure?

You will need to wait in the department for about an hour after the procedure before going home. This is so that we can ensure you are urinating well. Please be aware that you will urinate some blood. This is normal.

## Aftercare advice

Once you have returned home, you should:

- rest for 24 hours
- drink plenty of fluids (preferably water) - Aim for two to three litres (six pints/15 cups/10 mugs) in the first 24 hours. This will help clear the urine of stone fragments and blood.
- take regular pain relief medication such as paracetamol for a few days, if needed (follow the instructions on the packet)

If you wish to travel abroad, you should inform your travel insurer that you have kidney stones. If your treatment is planned close to a holiday or business trip, the treatment should be postponed. This is because you may experience severe pain (renal colic) as the stone fragments pass through your ureter (tube between your kidney and bladder). There is also a small risk of these stones getting stuck in the ureter, occasionally needing emergency hospital admission.

## Are there any side effects?

### Common side effects include:

- blood in your urine for a few days
- pain in your kidney
- a urinary infection
- bruising or blistering of the skin on your back or the front of your tummy
- the need for further SWL treatments
- failure to fragment very hard stones (you may need to have an alternative treatment)

### Less common side effects include:

- severe infection requiring intravenous (into a vein) antibiotics
- kidney damage (this is rare) or blockage requiring exterior kidney drainage (nephrostomy)
- stone fragments becoming stuck between the kidney and bladder requiring surgery
- recurrence of stones

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## When to seek urgent medical advice

Contact your general practitioner (GP) immediately if you have any concerns or any of the following apply to you:

- you develop a temperature (38°C or above)
- you feel generally unwell
- you are vomiting
- you have severe pain when you urinate (wee)
- you are unable to urinate
- any bleeding increases

If your GP surgery is closed, go to your nearest emergency department. Let the healthcare professional assessing you know that you have had SWL.

## Follow-up care

We will arrange a follow-up appointment for you in the urology stone clinic two to four weeks after your treatment (depending on the size and location of your stone).

## Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us.

Urology nurse specialists

Telephone: **023 8120 8455** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

Mobile: **07747 250068** (Monday to Thursday, 8am to 6pm)

Email: [urologystonenurses@uhs.nhs.uk](mailto:urologystonenurses@uhs.nhs.uk)

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