

# Radical Orchidectomy

Urology department



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You have been referred to us with a lump in your testicle and the ultrasound scan shows that there is a tumour in your testicle. The best treatment for this is an Orchidectomy.

### What is an Orchidectomy?

An Orchidectomy is the removal of a testis (or Testicle). Under anaesthesia a small incision (cut) is made in the groin or more rarely the scrotum. The testis is found, the blood vessels carefully cut and tied, and the testis is removed. The skin is then closed with stitches.

### What will happen before the operation?

Before the operation, we will need to assess if you are fit enough to have a general anaesthetic, this is called a Pre-operative assessment. This may involve some blood tests including Tumour Markers, blood pressure test and a chest x-ray. Sometimes a heart tracing called an ECG is also done. The anaesthetist will also see you, either at this time or just before your operation.

You will be told when to attend for your operation and when to stop eating and drinking. You may be asked at this time if you wish to have a prosthesis fitted (a false testicle), if you feel unable to decide at this time, this can be offered again in the future.

### Do I have to do anything before the operation?

To reduce the risk of getting an infection after the operation we ask you to do the following things a couple of hours before the operation:

- Have a bath or shower and wear clean clothing
- Put on a hospital gown (you may wish to continue wearing your underpants)
- Some centres ask you to shave the area where the incision will be made

Just before to go to the operating theatre you will be asked to do the following:

- Go to the toilet to pass urine (pass water)
- Remove all jewellery (except your wedding ring which can be taped to your finger)
- Remove all glasses, contact lenses, hearing aids and dentures
- If you need any of these items until you reach the operating theatre, please tell the nurse

### How will I feel after the operation?

After the operation you may feel drowsy and it is essential that someone is able to collect you. You can usually go home on the day of the operation or the day after depending on how you feel. Before you leave the doctor will see you and check you are:

- Moving around freely
- Able to eat and drink
- Mostly pain free
- Able to pass urine (pass water)

### Will the operation be painful?

Any discomfort you experience should be relieved by taking the analgesics (pain relief medication). You will be given these after your operation and a small supply to take home. In the unlikely event these do not control your pain or you require more please contact your GP.

### Will I need to do anything to the wound?

The stitches are usually dissolvable, so do not need removing. The wound dressing may be removed two days after the operation when you have a bath or a shower. Soap and Water is entirely adequate and you may wash as often as you like.

When you remove the dressing there may be a small amount of blood on it, this is quite normal and nothing to worry about. The wound may be swollen and bruised as well as the scrotum on the same side, but this should subside gradually.

**However, sometimes the wound can show signs of an infection, these are:**

- Redness
- Tenderness
- Persistent throbbing
- Wound is leaking fluid or pus
- Swelling around the wound
- Feeling shivery as if you have flu and you have a high temperature

If you experience any of these symptoms, please make an appointment to see your GP.

### **Are there likely to be any side effects?**

You may have some swelling, bruising of the scrotum/groin and sometimes it feels like there is a lump on the in the scrotum at the site where the testicle has been removed, called a haematoma (small blood clot). This is normal and is caused by the removal procedure and is often helped by wearing supportive underpants for a couple of weeks, rather than boxer shorts.

If the haematoma becomes larger or hot/tender please see your GP.

### **When can I go back to work?**

You can return to work usually one to two weeks after the operation, but if you perform strenuous work which requires heavy lifting, you should not return for four to six weeks.

### **When can I continue driving?**

You should not drive for at least a week; however you should refrain from driving until you can perform an emergency stop without strain or pain.

### **When can I start playing sports?**

In most cases sporting activities can resume after four to six weeks.

## When can I resume sexual intercourse?

Once you feel comfortable. After this operation some men may experience problems with body image and possibly may feel less masculine. This is normal and usually subsides in time.

Be patient and your sexual function should return to how it was before the operation. One of the hormones your testicles produce is Testosterone - this makes you feel male, gives you hair and beard growth, shapes your body, gives you your sex drive and helps you to get and maintain erections. In a few men, when a testicle is removed, the remaining testicle has not got the ability to take over the production of Testosterone and men feel tired, have a lack of sex drive and not able to get or keep an erection.

If you have any of these signs please tell your nurse specialist or the team in Bristol.

## Are there any other effects I should know about?

Following the operation we cannot guarantee that your fertility will not have been affected. If you wish to discuss this further before or after your operation please speak to your nurse/doctor. Sperm storage may be discussed prior to the operation.

## What happens next?

After the surgery, a Computerised Tomography (CT) scan of your chest, abdomen and pelvis will be arranged to see if the cancer has spread to any other parts of the body. This is carried out within two weeks of the operation.

Further blood tests (Tumour Markers) will also be arranged.

When these are completed, a referral is sent to the Bristol Testicular Cancer Service Multidisciplinary Team, who will review your case. This meeting is held every Friday morning at 8.30am. The team will look at the tumour under the microscope, look at the CT scan, assess the tumour markers in the blood and decide the best treatment or follow-up for you.

You will be sent an appointment to be seen by the team in the Testicular Cancer Clinic in the Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre where you will be told the results of the meeting.

### Will I need any further treatment?

If the cancer has not spread and the Orchiectomy removed all of the tumour, the operation may be the only treatment you will need and a programme of follow-up offered (called Active Surveillance) to check if the cancer returns in the future.

Sometimes however, the cancer has spread to other organs such as the lungs and lymph nodes in the abdomen. When this happens, a course of chemotherapy or radiotherapy is recommended, this will be discussed with you in Bristol.

Whichever option you and your doctor agree on, it is important to remember that even if the cancer does come back, more than nine out of ten men with testicular cancer are cured of the cancer.

**If you would like this leaflet in another format or in a different language, please ask a member of staff.**

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