

URETHROLYSIS

Background Information

Urethrolysis is a procedure to free the urethra from surrounding tissue. It is often done when the urethra is partially obstructed. Urethral obstruction sometimes occurs after surgery for Stress Urinary Incontinence.

Some women with long-standing urethral obstruction may also have bladder instability with symptoms of urgency, frequency and urge incontinence. They may also encounter difficulty in voiding with a poor stream, requiring the need to perform Intermittent Self Catheterisation (ISC).

The Procedure

- Usually an overnight hospital stay is required.
- A general anaesthetic is usually given, occasionally a regional anaesthetic is used, however the choice remains the discretion of the anaesthetist.
- A small incision is made through the vagina. The urethra is freed from the tissue around it. Any tape, or sling that is there may be cut or partially removed. A vaginal pack may be inserted and this will be removed the next morning.
- Occasionally an abdominal wound may be required; this will be discussed with you prior to surgery.
- An indwelling catheter will remain in place overnight and removed the following morning, where you will commence a trial of voiding. If you can pass urine you may be discharged from hospital. However it may still be necessary to perform ISC.

Expected Benefits

- Improved urinary stream.
- Improvements in urgency and frequency, but this may take some months.
- Reduced number of urinary tract infections.

Potential Risks

Any surgery has an associated risk.

Risks associated with Urethrolysis may include:

- Anaesthetic complication
- Wound infection
- Bladder perforation with a need to keep the catheter in for up to 10 days
- Temporary voiding dysfunction
- Rarely, no improvement of prior symptoms.