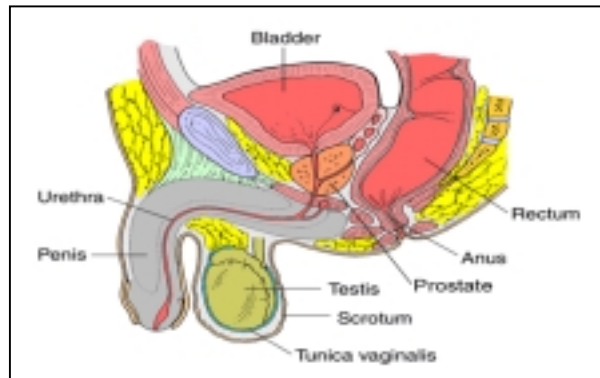


# RADICAL PROSTATECTOMY

## PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

### What is a radical prostatectomy?

A radical prostatectomy is the surgical removal of the entire prostate gland, the seminal vesicles, the ampullae of the vas and surrounding tissues (including the bladder neck). The bladder is then surgically reconnected to the urethra.



### How do I care for myself after radical prostatectomy?

Care after radical prostatectomy includes paying close attention to the following:

- Activity:** Limit physical activity for the first two weeks after surgery to allow your body to rest and heal. Consult with your surgeon before resuming your normal activity level. Pay particular attention to the following:
  - No heavy lifting (do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds, i.e. two gallons of milk).
  - No driving. Limit long car rides.
  - No strenuous exercise, limit stair climbing.
- Bowels:** The rectum and the prostate are situated next to each other (see above). Very large or hard stools that require straining to pass, may cause bleeding. With physician approval you may consider a diet high in fiber. Take stool softeners each day as prescribed by your physician. A bowel movement every other day is reasonable. A mild laxative may be used if recommended by your physician.
- Catheter Care:** Your catheter is very important to allow for healing after surgery.
  - You may use either leg bags or external (straight drainage) bags.
  - Empty the bag when it is half full. While the catheter is in place, some blood in the bag is normal.
  - As long as the catheter is draining well, a little blood is normal and does not require treatment. Heavy bleeding or clots in the drainage bag should be reported to your surgeon.
  - The tip of the penis may get sore from the catheter rubbing or pulling. Keep the catheter well-secured and use plain soap and water to wash this area daily or more often if needed.

## How do I care for myself after radical prostatectomy (continued)?

4. **Diet:** You may return to your normal diet. To keep your urine flowing freely, drink plenty of fluids during the day (8-10 glasses). The type of fluid (except alcohol) is not as important as the amount. Water is best, but juices, coffee, tea, and soda are also acceptable. Alcohol, spicy foods and drinks with caffeine may cause irritation or a sense of the need to void despite the fact that the catheter is draining the bladder. If these foods are not irritating, they may be consumed in moderation.
5. **Hygiene:** You may shower and bathe as usual.
6. **Medication:** You should resume your pre-surgery medication, unless told differently by your physician.

### What Do I Need To Report to My Physician?

Report the following problems to your surgeon:

1. Fever over 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Heavy bleeding, or clots.
3. Drug reactions (difficulty breathing, hives, rash, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea).
4. Call **IMMEDIATELY** if the catheter falls out or stops draining.

### What Do I Need To Do For Follow-Up?

1. Take your medications as prescribed (see discharge instruction form).
2. Call your surgeon, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ to schedule a follow-up visit before you leave the hospital or when you get home. Generally your surgeon would like to see you 1-2 weeks after your surgery to monitor your progress and to remove your catheter.
  - ◆ Bring a small supply of adult diapers to your follow-up appointment. Most individuals do not have good urinary control when the catheter is first removed. Urinary control will gradually improve as you recover.
3. Some patients experience a period of impotence or incontinence after this surgery. It is best to discuss this with your doctor.