

# A stent to restore urine flow

## The ureteral or double-J stent



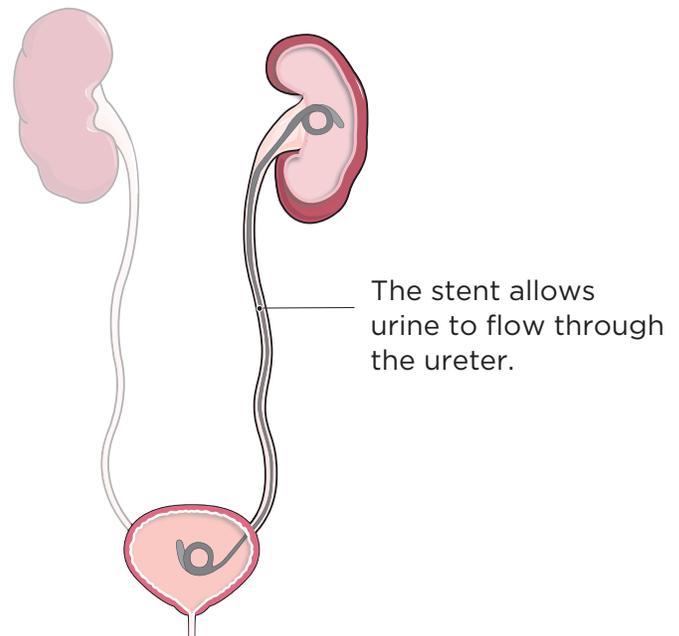
Your urologist will soon insert a ureteral stent. This sheet explains how it's inserted and how to take care of yourself afterwards.

### Why do I need a ureteral stent?

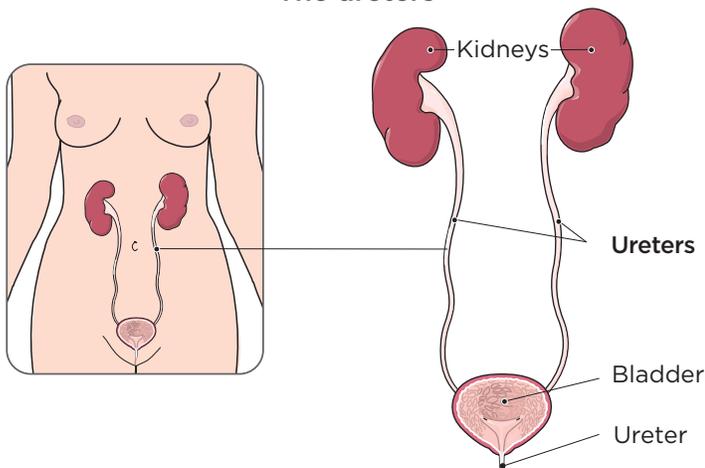
"Ureteral" comes from "ureter". The ureters are two small ducts about 20 cm long. They bring the urine produced by the kidneys to the bladder. Urine is stored in the bladder before being evacuated through another duct, the urethra. Sometimes the flow of urine through the ureters is obstructed or blocked. Here are some cases where this can happen.

- Small debris in the ureter. This can happen after treatment to destroy kidney stones.
- A narrowing of the ureter due to illness or accident, for example.
- A tumour in the kidney or ureter.

### The stent in place



### The ureters



### What is a ureteral stent and how does it work?

A ureteral stent is a thin, flexible tube that is placed in one or both of your ureters. This stent is also called a double-J stent because of the loops at each end that allow it to stay in place. It opens the passageway to allow urine to flow. In the case of kidney stones, it also allows debris to pass through, which is then evacuated in the urine.

## Are there any precautions to take BEFORE the stent is inserted?

Follow these instructions:

### ONE WEEK BEFORE

Depending on your health status, the doctor may ask you not to take aspirin or anti-inflammatories for 7 days before the stent is inserted. If in doubt, talk to your doctor or your care team. If you're taking a blood thinner, tell your doctor.

### THE NIGHT BEFORE AND THE DAY OF THE PROCEDURE

- Insertion in the operating room:**  
You'll need to fast from midnight the evening before the operation, i.e., no eating. Some liquids are allowed, see the health sheet [Getting ready for my operation](#).
- Insertion in the radiology clinic:**  
From midnight the evening before, you won't be able to eat, but you'll be able to drink the day of the procedure (juice, jello, chicken or beef broth, etc.). Your care team will give you information you about this.

## How is the ureteral stent inserted?

- The stent can be inserted through the urethra and then through the bladder. This procedure is done in the operating room. Depending on the case, either the nerves in the area through which the stent will pass will be numbed (local anesthesia) or you'll be "put to sleep" (general anesthesia).
- The stent can also go through the kidney if you've had kidney surgery. The stent is inserted in the radiology clinic through the opening already made.

Depending on your health status, the doctor will choose the method that's best for you.

Sometimes a string is attached to the stent to make it easier to remove. This string comes out through your urethra. It's important to never pull on this string.



## How long do I need to keep the stent?

The ureteral stent is only kept for a few days to a few weeks. In rare cases, the health condition requires a permanent stent, which will need be changed every 4 to 6 months. In all cases, your doctor will tell you when you need to have your stent changed or removed. Make sure you have an appointment with your doctor for the removal. Fill out the checklist on page 4.

## How is the stent removed?

Most often, the stent is removed in an outpatient clinic during a bladder examination (cystoscopy). The area is numbed (local anesthesia). Then the doctor uses a device to be able to see into the bladder (a cystoscope) and grasps the stent with very fine forceps. See the health sheet [Cystoscopy](#).

If a string was attached to the stent, the stent will be removed simply by pulling on that string. You may be instructed to remove it yourself at home. It's not complicated. Do it exactly on the date set by your doctor. Here's how:

- 1 Wash your hands with soap and then sit on the toilet.
- 2 If there is one, peel off the bandage that's holding the string against your thigh.
- 3 Gently pull the string until you see the tube of the stent appear.
- 4 Then pull the tube gently until it is fully out. It's about 30 cm (12 inches) long.

## Are there any side effects?

When the stent is in place, you may feel some discomfort. This is normal, as the stent can irritate the bladder. Here are the main potential discomforts and how to calm them:

- **Back or abdominal pain when you urinate.**

Usually, the pain can be reduced with acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil). If the pain is very severe, your doctor may prescribe other medications. Ask your care team for advice.



- **More frequent or urgent need to urinate.**

This can be relieved with medication that relaxes the muscles. Your doctor will prescribe this if necessary.

- **A bit of blood in the urine. Small blood clots in the urine.**

Drink plenty of fluids (8 glasses of water a day, for example) unless your doctor advises against it, and rest.

These discomforts can be annoying, but they don't cause any serious problems. They stop as soon as the stent is removed. They can be more intense when you're physically active. In that case, your doctor may tell you to tone down your activities.

## Where do I call about my stent removal appointment?

Call the Urology Clinic, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

☎ 514 890-8402

You can also leave a voice message

☎ 514 890-8000, ext 36411

**Go to the Emergency Room if you experience any of the following:**

- Fever of 38.5°C (101.3°F) or more



- Large blood clots in your urine
- Difficulty urinating
- Strong pain not relieved by medication
- Nausea and vomiting
- Chills

## Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

For any health concern related to your double-J stent, call the **CHUM Patient Health Line**.



### CHUM PATIENT HEALTH LINE

**514 890-8086**

**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

You're a CHUM patient? You have questions about your health status? A nurse can help you.



### USEFUL RESOURCES

Other CHUM health fact sheets are available. Ask your care team which fact sheets can help you.



You can also read them online.  
[chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)

*The content of this document in no way replaces the advice of your healthcare professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal  
**chumontreal.qc.ca**

Use this checklist to remember your follow-up dates

### Date of insertion of the ureteral stent

Date	
Time	
Place	

### Date of removal of the stent (provided by your care team after your return home)

Date	
Time	
Place	

### Follow-up appointment

Date	
Time	
Place	

### Date of stent replacement

Date	
Time	
Place	

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