

What is a Nephrostomy/Nephrouterostomy?

A Nephrostomy/Nephrouterostomy is a procedure in which a catheter is placed through the skin and into the kidney to drain urine. This procedure is performed in the X-ray Department by an Interventional Radiologist (X-ray specialist). Ultrasound and X-ray imaging helps the Radiologist to guide and position the catheter into the exact place.

Why do I need this procedure?

The most common reason for these procedures is a blockage to one of the ureters (the tubes that carry urine from your kidney to the bladder). When the ureter is blocked, urine collects in the kidney causing pain, fever and may even lead to the kidney to stop working all together. By placing this drainage tube, the urine has a pathway to leave the kidney and relieve the symptoms.

What should I expect?

You will be asked to sign a consent form. It is important that you understand the procedure and its benefits and risks. Bring a family member or friend with you, to help with your questions or concerns about the procedure. On the day of the procedure, you will have an intravenous line (IV) placed into a vein in your arm and antibiotics given, to help prevent infection. This IV line will also be used to give you other medicines and fluids during the procedure.

You will be asked to lie on your stomach, where the Radiologist will give you local anaesthetic and a small cut made in your back, just below your bottom rib. The drainage tube will be positioned using ultrasound and X-ray imaging. Once the catheter is in place, the end of the catheter that is outside your body is connected to a drainage bag for the urine to drain into. It usually takes about 90 minutes to perform, but this is not an absolute timeline.

What happens after the procedure?

You may be a little sore after the procedure, but this should gradually disappear. If you are an inpatient or being admitted, you will go to your hospital room where the staff will monitor you. Each patient's length of stay will vary.

If you are outpatient and having your drainage tube changed only, then you will go to the Same Day Surgery unit (SDS) to recover and then you can go home. Due to the medication you will receive, you won't be allowed to drive yourself. Make sure you arrange for someone to take you home.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 416-431-8107 (General campus) or 416-495-2480 (Birchmount campus).