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Shockwave Lithotripsy (ESWL)

Pre-Operative Instructions for Patients

ABOUT YOUR PROCEDURE

Shockwave lithotripsy breaks up a kidney or ureteral stone using focused sound waves delivered from outside the body. **Nothing enters your body** — no incisions and no instruments. The shockwaves pass harmlessly through tissue and concentrate their energy on the stone, cracking it into small pieces that you then pass in your urine over the following days and weeks.

The procedure is done under sedation or general anesthesia and takes about 45 to 60 minutes. You go home the same day.

IMPORTANT — YOU STILL HAVE TO PASS THE FRAGMENTS

Unlike ureteroscopy, ESWL does not remove the stone — it breaks it up so you can pass it. **Expect several days to weeks of passing fragments, sometimes with episodes of colicky pain.** This is the normal, expected course, not a complication.

A stent is sometimes placed beforehand for larger stones. Success depends on stone size, location, and composition — some stones are too hard for shockwaves and need a different approach.

BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

- You will have a pre-operative visit, and possibly blood work, an EKG, or a chest X-ray depending on your health and age.
- If you have significant heart or lung disease, you may need clearance from your primary doctor or cardiologist.
- The hospital will call you with your arrival time, usually the day before.

MEDICATIONS

- **Blood thinners:** If you take aspirin, warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), apixaban (Eliquis), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), NSAIDs, fish oil, or vitamin E, **ask the provider who prescribes them when to stop** — usually 5 to 7 days before. Do not stop any prescription medicine on your own.
- **Diabetes medications:** Ask about adjusting insulin or oral agents, since you will not be eating.
- Bring a complete, current list of all your medications and doses.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

- **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight**, unless the hospital gives you different instructions. This includes water, gum, and candy.
- Shower with soap. Do not apply lotion, powder, or deodorant afterward.
- Remove nail polish and jewelry; leave valuables at home.
- Get a good night's sleep and arrange your ride.

THE DAY OF SURGERY

- Take only the medications you were told to take, with a small sip of water.

- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and flat shoes.
- Bring your photo ID, insurance card, medication list, and any paperwork.
- Bring your CPAP machine if you use one, and your glasses case and hearing aid case.
- **You must have a responsible adult to drive you home** and, for same-day discharge, to stay with you the first night.
- Leave contact lenses, jewelry, and valuables at home.

PLAN AHEAD

- Arrange 1 to 2 days off work, and expect intermittent discomfort for a week or two while passing fragments.
- Arrange a ride home and someone with you the first night.
- **Get a urine strainer** and plan to strain all urine to collect fragments for analysis.

WHEN TO CALL THE OFFICE

Call 909.236.3333 before your procedure if you develop fever, chills, or signs of a urinary tract infection. **ESWL is postponed if there is an active infection.**