

Urology department

Kidney stones: after your A&E visit

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about kidney stones. It aims to answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

What are kidney stones?

Kidney stones usually form in the kidney.

They can be found in the kidneys or in the tubes that drain the kidney into the bladder (the ureters).

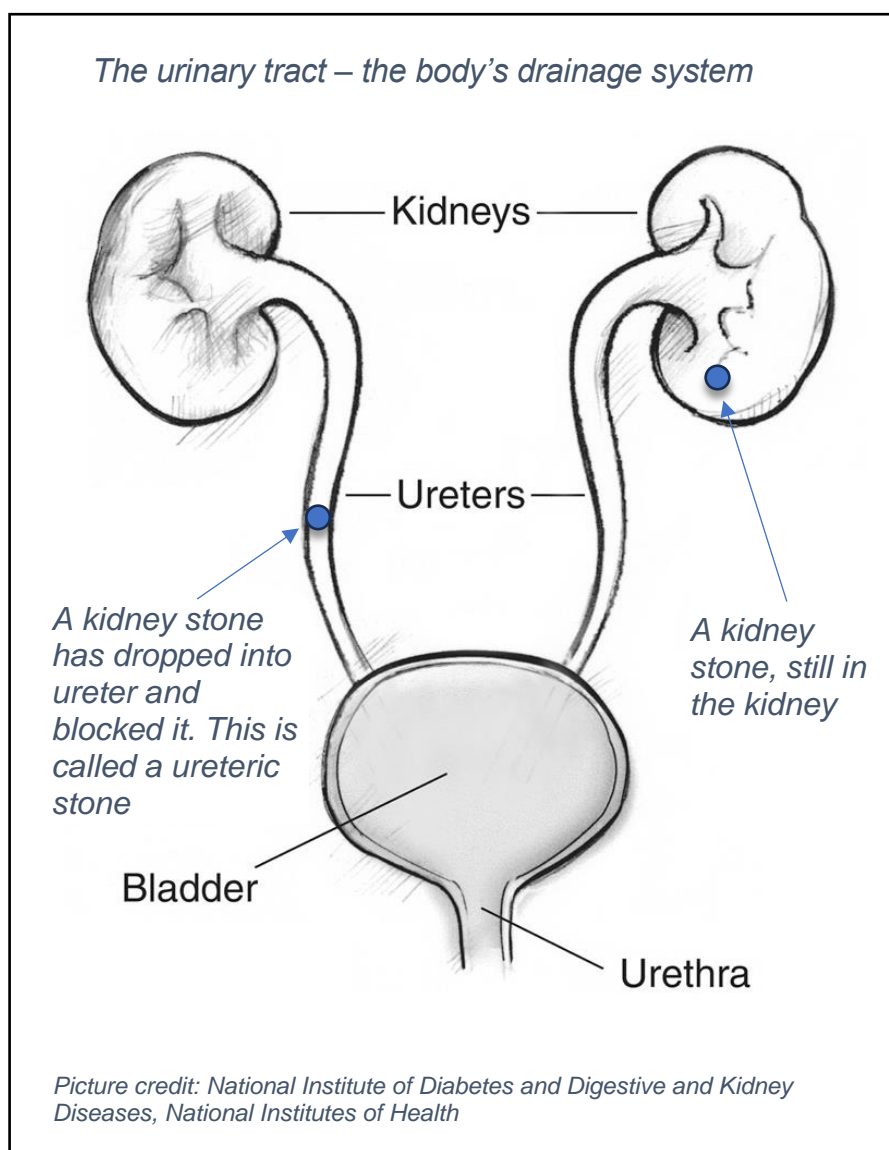
The image (right) shows examples of where stones may be found.

Doctors in A&E may choose to mark this image to show the size and location of your stones.

If you have formed a kidney stone, there is a 5 in 10 (50%) chance that you will form another one in the future. Drinking plenty of water helps reduce this chance. Please refer to the 'BAUS Stone diet leaflet' below for more information.

Stones vary in size and shape.

Small stones are smaller than a pea. That is less than 5mm or half a cm, or less than a quarter of an inch.



What are the symptoms of kidney stones?

Kidney stones do not always cause symptoms. If they do, these can include:

- **pain in the kidney** – small stones that stay in the kidney without blocking it are unlikely to cause much pain. But stones that are bigger or block the drainage of the kidney can cause pain.

Urgent treatment is rarely needed for kidney stones that have not dropped into the tube that drains into the bladder (ureter).

- **pain in the tube that drains the kidney to the bladder (ureter)**. If the stone travels down into this tube, you might feel a lot of pain around your back.

This pain shoots into the groin on the same side. This can be very painful. It gets worse if the stone gets stuck.

This is called a **ureteric stone**, and the pain is called **ureteric colic**

- **blood in your pee (haematuria)** – this is caused by the stone rubbing on the urinary system and can be normal under these circumstances
- **urinary tract infection (UTI)** – stones often cause infections in the urinary tract (shown on page 1). It's usually a good idea to treat your stones if you have lots of UTIs.



A woman with kidney pain. Stones can make your back and groin hurt too

Picture credit: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health

What happens next?

You'll usually pee out small stones by yourself, without us needing to do surgery or procedures. We often need to treat bigger stones that cause blockages or infection.

Will I have to stay in hospital?

You might need to stay in hospital for treatment if:

- your kidneys are not working properly. This could be because you have 1 kidney, or if both kidneys are blocked
- your pain is not controlled, even though you are taking pain killers
- if a stone blocks your kidney, it can cause a urinary infection at the same time. This can lead to fevers and unblocking the kidney can become an emergency
- the stone in your ureter is too big to pass by itself

How do you treat kidney stones?

You may need one of the following treatments if your stone does not pass and is causing a blockage or infection, or both. Use the QR codes to find out more about the treatments. The information is from the British Association of Urology (BAUS).

Ureterorenoscopy (URS)

This is an operation done with you asleep. We use X-ray guidance to pass a small camera passed into your bladder, up the water pipes. A laser is used to break the stone and remove it. We may put in a stent (see right).



Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL)

This is done in outpatients and does not need surgery. We direct high energy shock waves to the outside of your body, guided by X-ray or ultrasound imaging. The shock waves break stones into small pieces, which you pee out.



Ureteric stent insertion

This is an operation, usually done with you asleep. We put a flexible hollow tube into your ureter to help keep it open. We might do this at the same time we remove your kidney stone, or as a temporary procedure to unblock your kidney.



What happens when I am allowed to go home?

- you will be sent home with painkillers and sometimes extra medication
- you will have a telephone follow-up appointment booked within 1 to 2 weeks
- you may need more scans to check if the stone has passed or if we need to do something to help the stone pass
- we ask you to sieve your pee to see if the stone has passed. We can send it for analysis
- bloods tests to check your calcium and urate levels should have been done in A&E. If not, A&E should request the tests electronically. Please book your test via: www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-services/blood-tests.

When should I ask for help?

If you know you have stones and are at home, please visit A&E if:

- you have a fever
- your pain is uncontrolled, even though you are taking painkillers
- are being sick consistently (persistent vomiting)

How can I contact urology?

You can contact the urology secretaries Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 17.00.

Please email: imperial.urology.stones@nhs.net and include:

- your full name
- date of birth
- hospital number
- your concerns
- when you last came to A&E.

Your email will be passed to the urology doctors. Please note we might not be able to respond quickly. Please attend A&E if you are unwell and need medical attention (do not wait for a reply)

Where can I find out more about kidney stones?

Go to the BAUS website: www.baus.org.uk/patients/conditions/6/kidney_stones

Stone diet: use this QR code for advice on how you can modify your food and fluid intake to reduce the risk of stones forming,



How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best service. Staff will be happy to answer any questions you have. If you have **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday) or email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team can often solve problems for you.

To make a **complaint**, contact our complaints department: Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net or telephone: 020 3312 1337 / 1349

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

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