

Urethral Sling Surgery for Stress Incontinence: Before Your Surgery

For many people, having urethral sling surgery can mean less worry about urine leakage with everyday activities like sneezing, laughing, and jogging.

Your pelvic floor muscles provide important support for your bladder.

The pelvic floor muscles help control the flow of urine from your bladder through a tube called the urethra.

But sometimes pelvic floor muscles can become weak.

This can happen because of changes in your body from childbirth, weight gain, or other conditions that stretch or weaken the pelvic floor.

And this can cause you to leak urine when you sneeze, cough, laugh, or do other things that put pressure on your bladder and urethra.

You may hear this called stress incontinence.

Urethral sling surgery is done to treat stress incontinence.

During the surgery, the doctor will place a sling around your urethra to support it and keep your bladder from leaking urine.

There are different types of urethral slings.

The sling may be made of synthetic mesh material, or it may be made from a strip of your own tissue or tissue from a donor.

You and your doctor can talk about your options and what's right for you.

Right before surgery, you'll get medicine so you don't feel pain during the procedure.

The surgery is done through small cuts, called incisions.

The doctor will make a small incision in your vagina.

In many cases, the doctor will also make an incision on each side of your lower belly or upper thighs.

Next, the doctor will insert the sling through the incisions and position the sling under your urethra for support.

Then the doctor will secure the sling to keep it in place.

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To finish the surgery, the doctor will close the incisions with stitches, glue, or strips of special tape.

After surgery, most people go home the same day.

Medicines make it unsafe for you to drive after surgery, so be sure to make arrangements for getting home.

Before the surgery, tell your doctor about all the medicines and natural health products you take, especially blood thinners, like aspirin.

Some can raise the risk of bleeding or cause problems with anesthesia.

Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before surgery.

Always follow your doctor's directions for preparing for surgery, including when or if you should stop eating and drinking.

Bring your photo ID, insurance card, and any paperwork your hospital may have asked for.

Surgery can be stressful.

But knowing what to expect and how to prepare can help.

And if you have any questions or concerns, you can always call your doctor.