



Lithotripsy (Overview)



Overview

This treatment breaks apart kidney stones that are stuck in your kidneys or your ureters (the tubes that connect your kidneys to your bladder). Breaking a stone into smaller pieces can allow it to pass more easily.

Shock Wave Method

Commonly, lithotripsy is done without surgery. Instead, high energy shock waves are used. With this method, you typically lie on a soft, water-filled cushion. Shock waves are aimed at your stone. The waves safely pass through your body, but break apart the stone. This doesn't work for all types of stones, but it is helpful for many people.

Other Methods

If shock waves won't work for your stones, your doctor can use a different method. Stones can be broken apart with laser light, or with electrical or ultrasonic energy. Your doctor may put a probe up through your urinary tract or through your skin to target the stone. After it is broken apart, larger pieces of the stone may be removed from your body. Smaller pieces later pass on their own.

Conclusion

Your doctor can help decide which type of lithotripsy is right for you. Follow your doctor's instructions to help avoid future kidney stones.