

## Ten Questions About Penile Implant Surgery

**What is the diagnosis for men who need a penile implant.?** A penile implant is used for men with severe erectile dysfunction that does not respond adequately to oral medication, penile injections, vacuum erection devices or other treatments for his erectile dysfunction.

**What is a Penile Implant?** A penile implant replaces the normal erectile tissue in the penis to create an erection that feels very normal for you and your partner. We most commonly use 3-piece prosthesis with a reservoir and a pump that can transfer fluid in and out of the cylinders in the penis. Semi-rigid devices are also popular that do not require a pump or transfer of fluid.

**How is the procedure done?** You will have either a general or a spinal anesthetic. For a 3 piece implant a small incision is made in the lower abdomen or in the scrotum that allows us to get the implant positioned. A second incision is sometimes made in the lower abdomen for placement of the reservoir. For a semi-rigid implant an incision is most often made near the end of the penis. The procedure takes about 1-2 hours.

**What are the benefits of a penile implant?** The benefit of a penile implant is that a man will be able to have a reliable erection that is satisfactory for intercourse.

**What are the risks of the penile implant surgery?** Possible Side Effects of the Penile Implant include: bleeding, bruising, pain, swelling, infection, scar tissue, implant malfunction requiring replacement or revision surgery. Infection is our biggest concern. If the implant gets infected the device most often has to be removed. A man should be aware that the erection created by a penile implant will be shorter and possibly narrower than his normal erection. The implant does not fill the penis in the same way that blood fills the penis for an erection. The implant creates a reliable rigid erection but the erection is not the same as when a man was getting his natural erections.

**Is this a common procedure?** Yes this is a common procedure. Many men have erectile dysfunction from diabetes, hypertension, obesity, cholesterol buildup in the arteries, prostate cancer surgery and many other reasons. Many men struggle with pills, vacuum devices and injections and choose to move towards penile implantation.

**Are there alternatives?** The alternative for most men not choosing an implant is a choice to either not be sexually intimate or to have intimacy without intercourse.

**Why now?** The choice of when to do an implant is a challenging one for most men. Deciding when to do implant should be discussed with your partner to make sure it is the right thing for your relationship.

**How do I prepare for surgery?** Purchase a special soap called Hibiclens to be used for 7 days before surgery. (This can be purchased from your pharmacy without a prescription.) While showering or bathing clean the area of the lower abdomen, penis, scrotum, between the legs and the rear. Lather and leave the soap on for 1-2 minutes before rinsing. Do not shave yourself before your procedure. We will shave a small area at the time of your surgery. If you are on blood thinners such Aspirin, Plavix, Ticlid, Coumadin/Warfarin, Vitamin E, Fish Oil or any over the counter supplement that can increase risk of bleeding these must be stopped prior to surgery. Aspirin and Plavix are usually stopped 7-10 days prior to surgery. Warfarin/Coumadin are usually stopped 5 days prior. The doctor who prescribed these

medications—eg. your primary physician or cardiologist—needs to be aware that you are stopping these medications and will tell you if it's safe.

**How long will it take me to recover?** We try to send most patients home on the same day as their surgery. Occasionally men will stay one night in the hospital for control of pain or for post-anesthesia care (such as sleep apnea).

Keep the site clean and dry for 24 hours. Do not shower for 24 hours after the procedure then shower or sponge bath only for two weeks. No heavy lifting (30 pounds), exercise or strenuous activity for at least 2 weeks. Returning to work will depend on your employment.

Follow instructions on taking your antibiotics and pain medicine. Finish the antibiotics you are prescribed unless you have a reaction to the antibiotic. Take only as much pain medication as needed. Avoid long periods of standing or walking in the first 7-10 days following the procedure. Elevate your scrotum with a towel to discourage scrotal swelling. If you have any fevers, chills, discharge from the wound or worsening pain after receiving your implant, please contact Minnesota Urology at 651-999-6800 to have us evaluate for a postoperative infection.

Most patients will need about 2 weeks before the swelling goes away and the penis becomes more comfortable and will begin to inflate and use the device by 6 weeks after surgery.

**Is this covered by insurance?** Yes. This procedure has good insurance coverage. We do need to make sure we have coverage prior to proceeding with the surgery, called prior authorization. That is typically handled at the level of our business office and your discussing the procedure with your insurance carrier.