Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Penile Implants

This information explains penile implants, including the benefits, risks, and possible complications. Read this information carefully before you decide if you want a penile implant. If you have any questions, talk with your healthcare provider.

Penile implants

A penile implant is an inflatable device placed inside your penis. It helps you get an erection (get hard for sex). Penile implants are used to treat impotence (not being able to have or keep an erection). This is also called erectile dysfunction (ED).

The penile implant is surgically placed inside and completely within the body. To use the implant, you will press a pump, located inside your scrotum. Your scrotum sends fluid into the implant inside your penis. This makes your penis get hard enough for sex. When you're done with the erection, you can deflate the implant. Your healthcare provider will give you more information during your consultation. You will be scheduled for a training session to use your penile implant after surgery.

You may want to consider a penile implant if:

- You tried other treatments for ED that didn't work. Other treatments include medications, injections (shots), and vacuum devices.
- You tried other treatments but felt side effects.

Penile implants do not increase the length of or girth (distance around) your penis.

Benefits of penile implants

- The penile implant can make your penis become hard, similar to a natural erection.
- You don’t need to take medication for it to work.

Risks of penile implants

- The implant must be put in during surgery. Every surgery has some risks. Your healthcare provider will discuss the risks of this surgery with you.
- Penile implant surgery is irreversible. This means that the implant can’t be removed if you no longer want the implant. Other treatments for ED will not work for you.

Possible complications

While complications after penile implant surgery are rare, they can happen. Some possible complications are more likely to happen right after surgery, including:

- Scrotal hematoma.
    - This is swelling and bruising of your scrotum, lower abdomen (belly), and inner thighs.
    - You’re at an increased risk for scrotal hematoma in the first few weeks after surgery
    - Your healthcare provider will give you instructions on how to prevent scrotal hematoma. You will also be given special undergarments to wear after your surgery.
- Infection
    - You’re at an increased risk for infection within the first 8 weeks after surgery, though infection may occur up to 1 year after surgery.
    - You’re more likely to get an infection if you’re having penile implant surgery for a second time.

    - If your implant gets infected, it will need to be removed and replaced. You may need to stay in the hospital if intravenous (IV) antibiotics are needed to clear the infection.

You may also have some problems months or years after your surgery, such as:

- Your implant stops working. If this happens, it will need to be repaired or replaced.
- Your implant may wear down over time. If this happens, you will need to have another surgery. Your surgeon will determine if the device can be repaired or if it will need to be replaced.
- Your implant auto inflates (inflates by itself). If you experience auto inflation, let your healthcare team know.
- Other less common complications may include:
    - Erosion, which is when the implant comes through the skin. This is more likely to happen if you had an infection. If this happens, your implant will need to be removed.
    - Migration, which is when the implant moves out of place. If this happens, you may need another surgery.

Your healthcare team will review all of the risks, benefits, and possible complications with you during your consultation.

What to expect after surgery

- Most people will leave the hospital a few hours after surgery. Some people may need to stay in the hospital overnight. Your healthcare provider will let you know when you can plan to leave the hospital.
- You can’t masturbate or engage in any sexual activity for 6 weeks after surgery. This includes vaginal, oral, and anal sex.
- We recommend that you take at least 7 days off of work to recover.
- You may have pain and swelling for about 2 weeks after surgery.
- It may take more than 6 months for your penis to feel normal again.

- There should be no change in the quality of your ejaculation or orgasm.

Follow-up

- You will be scheduled for a follow-up visit 2 weeks after your surgery to review your progress. This will be scheduled for you.
- You will have another follow-up visit 6 weeks after your surgery to learn how to use your penile implant.

If you have any questions or concerns after your surgery, call your healthcare team.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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