



Patient & Family Guide
2022

Extracorporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy (ESWL) for Kidney Stones

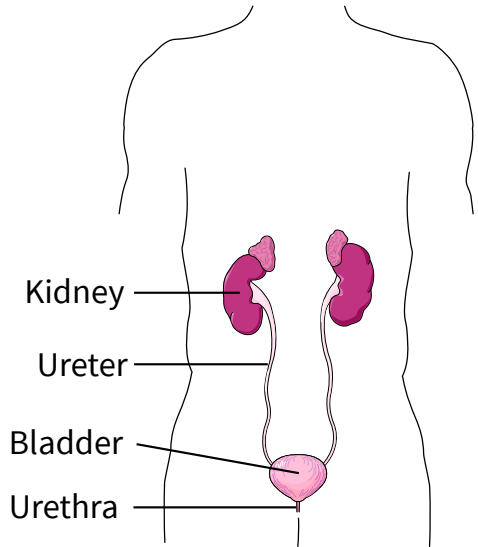


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Extracorporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy (ESWL) for Kidney Stones

What are kidney stones?

- Kidney stones are hard pieces of salt. They build up over time and can be as small as a grain of sand, up to 3 cm or more across.
- Although these stones form in the kidney, they often move and can be found anywhere in the urinary tract.
- When the stones get too big to leave the body on their own, they can block the flow of urine (pee). This may cause sudden, severe (very bad) pain. Other symptoms may include bloody urine, burning when you urinate (pee) and nausea (upset stomach).
- Kidney stones may be caused by what you eat and drink, age, climate, infection, or inherited (passed down from your parents) disorders.



What is extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL)?

A special machine makes energy shock waves that target your kidney stone(s). The brittle (shatters easily) stone absorbs (takes in) the shock waves and breaks into small pieces. These pieces can then leave your body in your urine.



Your urologist (doctor who specializes in the urinary system, made up of the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and the urethra) will use X-ray equipment to see the stone(s) during the treatment. The area where the ESWL was done may be bruised, but serious injury is rare.

How is ESWL done?

- You will be asked to lie on a special table.
- The anesthetist (doctor who gives you medication to put you to sleep for surgery) will start an intravenous line (IV). You will get medication to make you feel comfortable during the treatment.

- The urologist will use an X-ray to find the exact location of the stone(s).
- A water balloon on the shock wave machine will be placed against your body.
- During the treatment, you will hear and feel a tapping where the water balloon touches your skin.
- The shock waves will break up the stone(s). This may take 30 to 45 minutes.

Care at home

For the next 24 hours (1 day):

- **Do not drive a car. You must have someone drive you home after the treatment.**
- **Do not drink alcohol.**
- **Do not sign any legal or financial documents.**

Controlling discomfort

- You can use acetaminophen (Tylenol® or Tylenol® 1) for mild pain. These medications are available without a prescription.
- Soaking in a tub of warm water 1 or 2 times a day may help to relieve mild back pain.
- ESWL does not make an incision (cut). You may have some bruising on your back.
- You will likely have some blood in your urine for a few days — this is normal.

Fluids

Drink plenty of fluids for several days after your procedure. This will help you pass the stone pieces.

Activity

- You may go back to your usual activities when you do not see any blood in your urine.
- Mild exercise (like walking) may help you pass the stone fragments.

Antibiotics

You may need to take antibiotic medication if you have had problems with urinary tract infections. Your doctor will talk about this with you.

Straining your urine

- **You must strain your urine for 3 to 4 days after treatment.** This is to collect any stone pieces that you pass. These pieces will be tested at the lab.
- We will give you a strainer for this. You can also use coffee filters if you need extra.
- Bring any stone pieces with you to your follow-up appointment.
- You may not pass any stone pieces until several weeks after your treatment. If this happens, you should still try to collect the stone pieces and save them for testing.

Call your primary health care provider if you have:

- A fever (temperature over 38.5° C/101.3° F).
- Severe pain that is not relieved by acetaminophen (Tylenol® or Tylenol® 1).

If you cannot reach your primary health care provider, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

Follow-up care

An X-ray and/or appointment to see your urologist:

Urologist: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place:

Urology Clinic – Level 4, Halifax Infirmary

Other: _____

