

Learning about . . .

## **Tension-Free Vaginal Tape- Obturator Route Surgery for Stress Urinary Incontinence**

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### **What is stress incontinence?**

Stress urinary incontinence occurs when you cannot control the flow of urine with an increase of abdominal pressure. This may happen when you laugh, cough or exercise. If you have stress urinary incontinence you have weak pelvic muscles or tissue that cannot support the urethra in its correct position. The urethra is the tube that carries urine from the bladder.

### **What is this surgery?**

Tension-free vaginal tape-obturator route surgery or TVT-O is done by placing a special type of tape under the urethra and brought out at the inner thigh. The tape acts like a sling to support the urethra.

### **What happens before surgery?**

Follow the checklist for surgery you got in the Pre-Admission Assessment Clinic. This will help you get ready at home. Arrange for someone to drive you home the day of surgery.

On the day of surgery, you will go to the Day Surgery Unit. A nurse will help you get ready for surgery. You will have a thin tube put into a vein in your arm. This is called an intravenous or IV. It is used to give you fluid and medication. After you are ready, a friend or family member can stay with you until you go to the operating room.

## What happens during surgery?

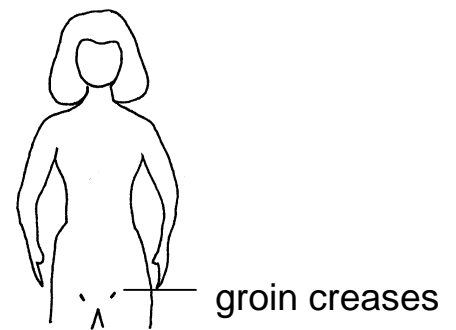
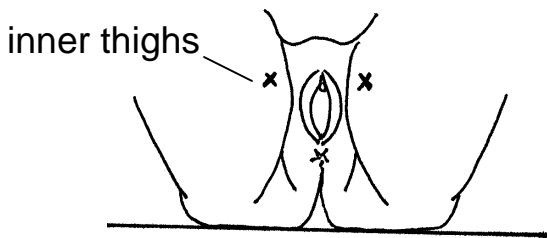
In the operating room you will have a spinal anesthetic with sedation or a general anesthetic:

- If you have spinal anesthetic with sedation a small tube is put into your back and medication put into the tube. You will not be able to feel from the waist down. You also have an oral medication to relax you.
- If you have general anesthetic, you will be asleep during the operation.

The doctor makes a 1 cm incision inside your vagina and 1 small incision in each inner thigh or groin crease. These incisions allow the doctor to thread the tape under the urethra to lift it.

Here are pictures of where the incisions may be:

When lying on back:



## How long is the operation?

This operation takes about 30 minutes.

## What happens after surgery?

You will go to the Recovery Room. You will have your blood pressure, oxygen and breathing checked often. You will then go to the Urology Unit for several hours or overnight.

You will begin sucking ice chips and sipping water when the nurse tells you. The IV will be taken out after you are drinking well.

A urinary catheter is a tube that drains urine from the bladder. Your nurse will insert a urinary catheter into your bladder to see how much urine you are holding if you have problems voiding. After you are able to void on your own 2 times, you will be able to go home.

### **What activity can I do?**

You cannot lift anything heavy for 3 weeks. This means you cannot lift anything over 5 kg or 10 lbs. This is the size of a small suitcase, grocery bag or small child. If lifting is a concern, talk to your doctor.

You can slowly return to your normal activities, as you feel comfortable.

### **Can I shower or take a bath?**

You can shower. Pat incisions dry. ✘Do not take a bath for about 1 week or until your incisions are healed.

You may have paper tape over the incisions on your thighs or groin creases. The tape will fall off after a few days or you can take it off after 3 days.

### **Can I work?**

Plan to be off work for 1 to 3 weeks. Your doctor will tell you how long you should plan to be off work.

### **What about sexual activities?**

You cannot use tampons or have sexual intercourse for 3 weeks.

## **What about my diet?**

For the first 48 hours drink the amount of fluid that you normally have. You want to prevent the bladder from getting full as this puts tension on the tape.

You can follow your normal diet when you go home.

## **When should I see the doctor again?**

You should have an appointment for about 3 weeks after surgery. Contact your doctor if you do not have an appointment booked.

## **When do I contact the doctor?**

Call your family doctor or surgeon if you have any of these problems:

- fever higher than 38.5°C or 100°F
- increase bruising around the incisions
- pain, burning or blood when you pass urine
- trouble passing urine
- urgent feeling that you have to pass urine all of the time
- bleeding from the vagina that is not your period. Light bleeding in the first few days is normal.

All of the stitches dissolve and are not removed by the doctor.

This handout was adapted with permission from Hamilton Health Sciences.