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FACTSHEET

LAPAROSCOPIC NEPHROURETERECTOMY

About the Procedure:

Occasionally, tumors in the kidney may involve the drainage, or collecting system of the kidneys, requiring the removal of the ureter as well as the kidney. This can be done in a minimally invasive fashion during a laparoscopic nephroureterectomy, which helps avoid a large incision, a long hospital stay, long recovery time, and offers more cosmetically appealing results. The kidney and its ureter (drainage tube) are removed using 4 to 5 dime-sized incisions, and an additional 6 to 7 centimeter incision to remove the kidney and ureter intact. The procedure usually takes about 3 to 4 hours and you should expect to spend at least 1 night in the hospital.

Preparing for the Procedure:

Take only clear liquids on the day prior to the procedure. Acceptable liquids include tea or coffee (no milk or cream), water, apple juice, Gatorade or other sports drinks, pop-sicles, italian ice, or chicken broth.

Drink five ounces of citrate of magnesium at 4:00 pm the day before the procedure. If this does not produce a bowel movement by 7:00 pm take an additional 2 ounces of citrate of magnesium. This is available over the counter in the laxative section of your pharmacy. Remember to drink plenty of clear liquids to stay hydrated while preparing for your procedure.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the procedure. You should take your usual medications as you normally would the morning of your procedure with a small sip of water only (avoid juice, milk, coffee, etc.).

Starting 5 to 10 days prior to your procedure (ask your doctor for a specific time), it is important to stop taking medications that might increase your risk of bleeding. For a list of blood-thinning medications that should be avoided, ask your doctor.

After the Procedure:

There will be a dressing on the incision that can be removed on the second day after the procedure. After that, it is OK to shower (let soap and water run over the incision, then pat dry), but baths and soaking in a tub should be avoided for 2 weeks after the procedure. The incision should be kept clean and dry to allow it to heal, so it is important to shower once a day. The incision generally heals in five to seven days, but avoid any strenuous activity and exercise or heavy lifting for 4 to 6 weeks after the procedure. Your doctor will remove the surgical staples in your incision at your first office visit following your discharge from the hospital. This is not painful and only takes a few minutes. It is usually OK to resume your blood-thinning medication the day after your procedure, but check with your doctor to be sure. Take all the medications prescribed by your doctor (including any antibiotics and pain medications), and schedule an appointment to follow up with him within the first 2 weeks after the procedure (ask your doctor if you are unsure when to follow up).

Make arrangements for someone to drive you home on the day of your discharge from the hospital.