ROBOTIC ASSISTED RADICAL PROSTATECTOMY

Providing Specialist Care in South Australia & Northern Territory
What is a Robotic Assisted Radical Prostatectomy?

What is the prostate?

The prostate gland is a small but important gland in the male reproductive system. Its main job is to produce secretions that make up part of the semen protecting and enriching the sperm. The prostate gland sits just below the bladder and surrounds the neck of the bladder and the beginning of the urethra (the tube through which you pass urine).

About the procedure

A robotic assisted radical prostatectomy is an operation for men with prostate cancer that uses the latest da Vinci XI Robot to assist the surgeon with the procedure. The robotic system provides a high definition 3D view for the surgeon and allows all members of the surgical team to view the procedure. Websites that can help you learn more about robotic surgery are listed below.

*Intuitive Surgical:*
www.intuitivesurgical.com

*Da Vinci Surgery:*
www.davincisurgery.com
www.davinciprostatectomy.com

Prior to the operation you would have discussed important aspects of the surgery. The way your surgery is approached depends upon the extent of the disease. The aim of the surgery is to remove all prostate cancer as well as maintain urinary control and sexual function.

Six small ‘band-aid’ incisions are made across the lower abdomen. The pelvis and lymph nodes are carefully evaluated for the presence of disease. The entire prostate gland and seminal vesicles are removed. The bladder neck is then joined to the urethra. A catheter is left in place to drain urine from the bladder.


**About the procedure cont.**

In order to maintain urinary control, as much bladder neck and urethra is preserved as possible. Return of sexual function after radical prostatectomy depends upon preservation of the nerves that travel alongside the prostate down to the penis (nerve sparing). In many cases we are able to preserve these nerves. It relies on very careful separation of the nerve containing tissue (neurovascular bundle) from the prostate.

The pelvic lymph nodes are located on the side wall of the pelvis. Prostate cancer can spread to these lymph nodes if more aggressive or advanced. If there is a risk of the lymph nodes being involved, then removal of these nodes will be advised.

**Preparation for Robotic Assisted Radical Prostatectomy**

Preparation for the procedure includes learning about the pelvic floor muscles and pelvic floor exercises. This usually involves an appointment with a continence nurse. A pre-operative appointment will usually be made to meet with your anaesthetist. Pre-operative blood and urine tests will be arranged.

**What to expect afterwards**

After the operation you will return to the ward. There will be six small ‘band-aid’ incision sites across the lower abdomen. You will also have a catheter in situ. Staff will encourage you to do deep breathing and leg exercises.

The chance of developing a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is low, and we do everything possible to minimise that risk. You will be fitted with firm stockings which you should wear for three weeks after surgery and continue with a daily injection of Clexane which is a blood thinner.

**Catheter care**

The nursing staff will fit a urine drainage bag that attaches to your leg. This allows for easier mobility. The catheter can be uncomfortable and may cause irritation of the penile tip. It can also irritate the bladder, which can sometimes give you a sense of needing to pass urine or produce bladder spasms. Please discuss any concerns with your nurse.

You will be given instructions on how to look after the catheter prior to admission. You will also be given instructions on how to self-administer the Clexane, or a nurse can be organised to visit you at home to provide this service.
Complications of surgery

The two main risks of robotic assisted radical prostatectomy are the potential for incontinence and erectile problems. The risk of these for you will be discussed in detail as part of the decision-making process.

Surgical risks include the following

*Bleeding* - Significant bleeding is uncommon now. Approximately 300mL less than open procedure.

*Urine infection* - The chance of a urine infection is around 10%. Antibiotics given around the time of surgery usually controls this.

*Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) / Pulmonary Embolus* - The risk is small but real, around 1%. All precautions are taken to minimise this risk.

*Rectal or ureteric injury* - Both structures are very close to the prostate and are therefore at risk with surgery. The risk though is very low, less than 1%.

*Bladder neck stenosis* - Narrowing of the join between the urethra and bladder is possible, but again the risk is low, around 2%.

Overall, most men do very well at the time of surgery and the risk of complications at the time of surgery is low.

After discharge from hospital

Hospital stay is usually overnight. When discharged, you will be given all the medications and information about supplies that you need.

*Catheter* - You will have a leg bag and a night bag for the time that the catheter remains in place. The catheter will usually remain for ten days. Do not do pelvic muscles exercises while the catheter is in place.

*Clexane* - You will be given a supply of Clexane injections to complete.

*Pain relief* - You will be given appropriate pain relief to take home with you. We advise taking regular pain relief to allow easier mobility.
After discharge from hospital cont.

**Cystogram** - Arrangements will be made for you to have a follow up x-ray. The x-ray takes about 1 hour. This is to ensure that the join between the bladder and urethra is secure and following this the catheter can be removed.

**Wound care** - The small dressings on the abdomen can stay on for five days and then be removed.

**Diet** - Avoid becoming constipated by keeping up a good fluid intake and eating fruits and foods high in fibre. If you have problems with constipation you may require an oral stool softener e.g. coloxyl with senna or movichol, which you will be able to get from your nearest pharmacy.

Contact our practice if you have any concerns. If any wound becomes red, hot, swollen, painful or continues to ooze it may indicate a wound infection. If the urine becomes cloudy or offensive smelling it may indicate a urine infection.

If the catheter stops flowing then it may be blocked. This could lead to a full and painful bladder. You should either contact our office or present to the Emergency Department for assessment and flushing of the catheter.

Most people can return to work in two to three weeks after the robotic procedure, whereas four to six weeks is usually required after an open approach.

**Driving**

*You should not drive for at least 3 weeks after having this operation* (or as instructed by your Urologist).

Patients who are travelling outside the metropolitan area are required to check when they are able to travel, and will be required to stay in the metropolitan area for 24 hours (or as instructed by your Urologist).
Emergency Contacts

In the event of an emergency, call our office within business hours and speak to our Practice Nurse. If out of hours, please call our office to contact our On-Call Urologist, or present to your nearest Emergency Department.

Ashford Hospital (8375 5205)
55 Anzac Highway, Ashford SA 5035
Emergency Department is open 7 days a week, 8:00am until 10:00pm

Wakefield Hospital (8405 3440)
300 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Emergency Department is open 7 days a week, 24 hours

**For patient’s outside the Metropolitan area, please present to your nearest hospital emergency department.

Follow up

You will be contacted by our practice nurse to follow up on your progress two weeks after the surgery. An appointment will be made to see your Urologist between four to six weeks after your discharge from hospital. A follow up PSA test will be organised and is required prior to the appointment.

If you have any concerns, please contact our office and speak to one of the practice nurses.