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POST EXTRACORPOREAL SHOCKWAVE LITHOTRIPSY (ESWL)

The purpose of the ESWL procedure is to pulverize kidney stones into small sand-like particles that may be passed spontaneously through the urinary tract. ESWL does not actually remove the kidney stones.

1. Patients may experience discomfort, soreness or pain at the treatment site. A prescription for pain-relieving medication or extra strength acetaminophen will be recommended. Some patients may have discomfort or pain as particles pass through the ureter. Redness or bruising can occur at the treatment site from the shock waves.
2. An antibiotic may be prescribed for the treatment or prevention of a urinary tract infection. All prescribed antibiotics should be finished.
3. Unless otherwise instructed by the urologist, patients should be able to resume all of their normal activities within 24 to 48 hours.
4. A liberal intake of fluids and mild exercise may aid in the passage of particles. Water is best.
5. Straining urine post-procedure will enable stone fragment analysis through your urologist's office. Some patients will not pass particles immediately, but may do so four to six weeks after the procedure. These particles may be very fine or similar to sand granules. Particles can be brown, tan, or black.
6. Additional ESWL treatment sessions may be required to adequately pulverize kidney stones. Large stones are more likely to require multiple treatment sessions, but even small stones may require more than one treatment.
7. The adequacy of stone pulverization will be determined from x-rays taken at the hospital prior to your first follow up visit at your urologist's office. Occasionally numerous sand particles can obscure a larger stone fragment. A larger fragment may become apparent on x-rays taken several weeks after the smaller particles have passed. Another ESWL treatment may be needed to complete the pulverization of any larger fragments.
8. Supplemental procedure(s) may be required. These procedures may include a cystoscopy with ureteral catheterization, stone manipulation, or basket extraction which may be done just prior to lithotripsy. Ureteroscopy or placement of a percutaneous nephrostomy (a tube inserted into the kidney through the back) may be done at your own hospital.
9. Most patients will be stone-free three months after ESWL, but a few will still have sand-like particles in their kidney. Some of these particles may continue to pass, but others may remain in the kidney. The long-term effects of these retained particles are not known.
10. Bleeding around the kidney has occurred in some patients. A blood transfusion may be needed after a lithotripsy procedure; however, this is rarely required.
11. ESWL will not prevent the formation and growth of new kidney stones. Metabolic evaluation and medical therapy may help prevent the formation of new stones.