



STONED

UROLOGICALLY SPEAKING

As the weather gets even hotter and more humid over the next few months – Don't forget to drink... WATER, that is!

The consequences of not drinking can result in the formation of kidney stone which is THE most painful condition.

Characteristically, kidney stone pain starts on one side of the back and moves around to the front towards the bladder. There is no warning. Those who have had it describe it as "the worst pain ever". It comes in waves and may be associated with nausea, vomiting and a desire to pass urine. Women who have had children describe it as worse than childbirth.

The cause of the pain is the muscle spasm associated with the tube from the kidney (ureter) trying to pass something solid when it is designed to squirt urine down to the bladder. Quite often the stones get stuck and require surgery which can be carried out in a variety of ways.

First of all, the patient is usually given pain relief. Then it is necessary to locate the position and size of the stone. This is usually done by carrying out an x-ray which is a single photograph combined with a CT scan. Pictures are taken before and after having had an injection of dye into a vein of the arm. This passes out through the kidneys and importantly, also shows if the other one is OK.

Small stones are likely to pass by themselves with pain relief and some medications may assist with that. If the stone is larger and located near the exit of the kidney and upper third of the ureter it may be able to be treated with Extra Corporeal Shock

Wave Lithotripsy. This is a procedure carried out in Day Surgery where sound waves are aimed at the stone causing it to break into smaller less painful fragments and pass naturally. In the last 18 years over 500 patients have been treated with this at Cairns Day Surgery.

If the stone is lower then usually a Ureteroscope is passed up through the bladder then ureter to the stone where it may be broken up and the pieces removed. This can be done with a mechanical instrument or laser. The laser can also be passed up through the body's natural tubes to the kidney to disintegrate stones there. No cuts on the skin needed!

Kidney stones are formed when substances in the urine form crystals which then grow (like a pearl) to be a stone. They usually occur as a result of relative dehydration but some families have tendencies to form them.

The best way to reduce the chance of forming kidney stones is to drink enough water each day so there is no colour to the urine. If you take vitamins it is not possible to see that as the water soluble ones are passed out in the urine and colour it. If you put a squeeze of lime or lemon juice in the water, it reduces the chance of stones further.



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Kidney Stone

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