

General Information and Follow-Up Care Extracorporeal Shockwave Lithotripsy (ESWL)

The purpose of ESWL is to break up kidney stones into small, sand-like pieces that may pass easily through your urinary system. ESWL does not actually remove the kidney stones from your body.

- 1) Patients may experience discomfort, redness, bruising, abrasions, or pain at the treatment site from the shock waves. There may also be discomfort or pain as stone pieces pass through the ureter. A prescription pain medication or extra-strength pain reliever may be prescribed for you.
- 2) An antibiotic may be prescribed for the treatment or prevention of a urinary tract infection. You should finish all prescribed antibiotics after your procedure.
- 3) Unless your doctor advises otherwise, most patients should be able to return to their normal activities within 24 to 48 hours.
- 4) Drinking a lot of fluids, along with mild exercise, may help stone pieces pass through your body.
- 5) Straining urine after the procedure may help your doctor study your kidney stone pieces. Some patients will not pass pieces immediately, but may do so four to six weeks after the procedure. These particles may be very small or similar to sand, and can be brown, tan or black.
- 6) Repeat ESWL procedures may be needed to break up your kidney stones. Large stones are more likely to require more than one treatment, but even small stones may require repeat procedures.
- 7) Your doctor may ask you to have new X-rays taken before your first follow-up appointment. This X-ray will help the doctor to see how well your kidney stones broke apart. Occasionally, X-rays will reveal additional or larger kidney stones. Another ESWL treatment may be needed to break up additional or remaining stones.
- 8) Additional procedures may be necessary as part of your treatment for kidney stones. These procedures include Cystoscopy, stone manipulation, or placement of internal ureteral stent, and may be done before the ESWL lithotripsy. Other procedures, such as ureteroscopy, laser lithotripsy, placement of an internal stent from kidney to bladder, or a percutaneous nephrostomy (a tube inserted into the kidney through the back) if needed. These additional procedures help the doctor to best treat your kidney stones.
- 9) Most patients will be stone-free three months after the ESWL procedure, but a few will still have small and sand-like pieces in their kidney. Some of these pieces may continue to pass, but others may remain in the kidney. The long-term effect of these retained particles is not known.
- 10) Bleeding around the kidney has occurred in some patients. A blood transfusion may be needed after an ESWL procedure, but this is seldom required.
- 11) ESWL will not stop new kidney stones from forming.