

# Having laser therapy to your penis

Department of Urology

Last reviewed: Oct 2023

Next review: Oct 2026

Information for patients

Leaflet number: 586 Version: 2

## What is laser therapy?

Laser therapy is the use of a small laser to remove cancerous cells from the end of your penis. A laser is a very thin, focused beam of light that heats the tissue it is directed at. It is used to destroy cancerous cells in early cancer of the penis.

You may need to have laser therapy several times to remove all the cancerous cells.

## What are the benefits of laser therapy?

Laser therapy removes the cancerous cells and allows the normal skin to heal. It is done as a day case procedure, so you will be able to go home on the same day.

## What are the possible risks of laser therapy?

As with all procedures there are possible risks, including:

- Pain, bruising and bleeding - your penis may become quite bruised and sore. The bruising should start to go down after a few days but it may take up to three months for your penis to recover fully.
- Wound infection - which may require treatment with antibiotics.

**You will have time to discuss these risks with the doctors and nursing staff before you consent to having laser therapy.**

## Are there any alternatives?

Alternative treatments include glans resurfacing. This is done whilst you are asleep (general anaesthetic) and involves cutting off the surface of the penis and using a split skin graft taken from a separate area (often the leg) to repair it.

Other alternatives include treatment with a chemotherapy cream. This treatment cannot be used if the cancer is very near the urethral meatus (opening to the water pipe) as the cream cannot be accurately applied and the creams cause inflammation and swelling as they work.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What do I need to do before laser therapy?

- Read your admission letter carefully.
- Do not wear contact lenses.
- Do not wear any jewellery, except for a wedding ring.
- Do not bring any valuables with you into hospital. University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal belongings.
- Do have a bath or shower before you come into hospital.
- Do wear comfortable clothing and footwear to go home in.

**Expect to wait on the unit before your procedure.**

## What do I need to bring with me?

- **Your appointment letter.** The time you are given to arrive is not the time of your procedure. The doctor needs to see you before the start of the list, so you may be waiting for your procedure for between two and four hours.
- **Any drugs, medicines or inhalers you are using.** Please take your usual medication before attending. **If you are taking medication which thins your blood such as warfarin, clopidogrel and aspirin this is usually stopped before treatment.** When you need to stop taking these medications should have been discussed with you in clinic - if you are unsure please ring us on 0116 258 4632 for advice.
- A contact number for your lift home.
- A dressing gown and slippers, if you have them.
- Something to do while you are waiting, such as a book or magazine to read.

## What happens when I arrive at the hospital?

Please come to the Urology Assessment Centre (Ward 28a) at the time stated on your letter. The nearest car park is Car Park 6.

You will be asked to sit in the waiting area until a nurse comes to collect you. The nurse will talk to you about the procedure and ask you a few questions. You will meet the doctor who will ask you to sign a consent form. If there is anything that you concerned about or do not understand, please ask the doctor before you sign the consent form.

## Having the procedure

A cannula (small needle) will be placed in the back of your hand.

Local anaesthetic injections will be given at the base of your penis, on the top and underneath.

We will then wait for the anaesthetic to take effect. You will still feel movement and pressure, but not pain.

The abnormal areas on the penis will then be treated with the laser. This will only take a few minutes.

## What happens after the procedure?

You will return to the waiting area and staff will make sure you are comfortable. If you have any discomfort or sickness please let the staff know so that they can help you. You will stay in the Urology Assessment Centre until your nurse is happy that you are well enough to go home.

## Wound care

You should keep your wound dry for 24 hours, after which you can bath or shower as normal and you can remove the dressing if it has not already fallen off. After your bath or shower, gently rinse the wound with clean water, but do not rub the wound. Then carefully pat it dry with a clean towel. Wearing close-fitting underwear will help to support the wound.

Always keep the wound clean and dry. Do not be tempted to touch or pick at it. The healing process will take between one and two weeks. Bruising and slight redness around the wound is usual and will not affect the healing. If you notice any increasing redness, swelling or discharge from the wound, you should contact the hospital for advice.

## Passing urine

You should not have any problems passing urine after laser therapy to your penis. We will make sure you have been able to pass urine before going home. If you have any problems following discharge please call us on the numbers below.

## Pain

You may have some pain following your procedure. You will be given pain-killing tablets to take at home. Take them regularly as prescribed for the first few days. If you run out of tablets you can take the empty box to your chemist who will let you know which tablets to buy; or you can arrange to see your own doctor to get some more tablets.

- Take painkillers when the pain starts. Do not wait for it to get really bad.
- Take painkillers before you go to sleep so you are able to rest.
- If your pain is very bad take the painkillers regularly, (four times a day) so they keep your pain under control.
- Take painkillers when you wake up, so they are working before you get out of bed.
- Painkillers can cause constipation, so you should drink plenty of water, and eat some high fibre foods such as fruit, vegetables and cereals.
- Everyone is different; do not be surprised if you are still having some pain for a week or two, this is quite normal.

## Driving

You must not drive for the rest of the day. You will not be covered by your car insurance. Do not drive until you can keep control of your car in an emergency. You should contact your insurance company if you are not sure.

## Work

Depending on your job, it is usual to return to work two to three days after this procedure.

## Sex

You should avoid sexual activity until your wound is completely healed, which could be about four to six weeks after the procedure.

## Physical activity

Do not do too much too soon. It is usual to feel some aches and pains for a few days, perhaps up to two weeks (avoid strenuous activity, contact sports and heavy lifting for at least two weeks).

## Holidays

Flying too soon after a procedure can increase the chance of problems, and you may not be covered by your insurance, please discuss this with your insurance company.

## Follow-up –what happens next?

Your follow-up will be discussed with you before you leave the hospital

## Emergency contact number

If you experience severe pain, develop a fever and or feel unwell, or your bleeding increases please contact the hospital urgently:

**Urology Emergency Admissions 0116 258 4247 (24 hours, seven days a week)**

## Important information

If you are ill, or cannot keep your appointment for some other reason, please let us know as early as possible. Another patient may benefit from the cancellation of your appointment.

If you have any concerns or questions contact us directly using the following telephone numbers:

**Urology Assessment Centre** (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4.30 pm)

Telephone: 0116 258 4632

**Urology Oncology Nurse Specialists (Key workers)** (Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm)

Tel: 0116 258 4637

## Sources of further information

### Macmillan Information and Support Centre

Leicester Royal Infirmary, Leicester LE1 5WW

Telephone: 0116 258 6189 (Monday to Friday from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm)

Email: [cancerinfo@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:cancerinfo@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

Website: [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/cancerinfo](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/cancerinfo)

### Orchid

Organisation providing support and information about men's cancers, including cancer of the penis.

National Male Cancer Helpline: 0808 802 0010

Website: [www.orchid-cancer.org.uk](http://www.orchid-cancer.org.uk)

### Macmillan Cancer Support

Freephone: 0808 808 00 00

Website: [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

### Cancer Research UK

Freephone: 0808 800 4040

Website: [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org)

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)