

Surgery, Recovery, and Healing

CARE AFTER SURGERY



The Hospital or Surgery Center

- ❑ Check in early, meet your surgical team & anesthesiologist
 - ❑ Discuss any past negative experiences with general anesthesia with anesthesiologist and surgeon in advance.

- ❑ **Phalloplasty**
 - ❑ **1st Stage Urethral Lengthening:** 4 hours
 - ❑ **Flap Stage:** 6-8 hours
 - ❑ **Implant Stage:** 1-3 hours

- ❑ **Metoidioplasty**
 - ❑ With Urethral Lengthening: 4 hours
 - ❑ Without Urethral Lengthening: 2-4 hours

- ❑ After surgery: You will recover in the PACU for 2-3 hours. You may feel nauseous, elated, groggy, tearful, thirsty/hungry.

- ❑ Depending on surgery/surgeon, you will be discharged from PACU or moved to a hospital room.



Hospital Stay

	Meta w/ UL	Meta w/o UL	1 st Stage Phallo (RFF) (similar to meta w/ UL)	Flap Stage Phallo	Implants
Hospital Length of Stay	2-4 nights	outpatient	2-4 nights	5-7 nights	outpatient

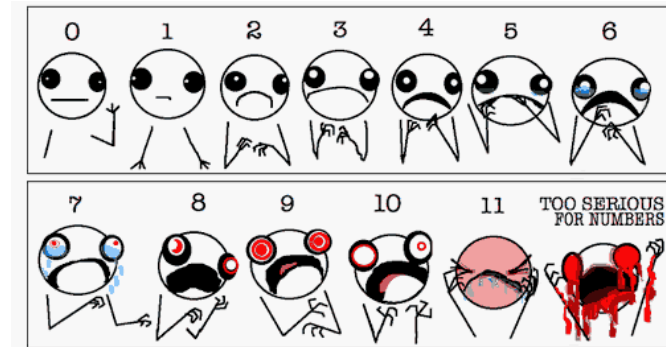
Hospital Stay

- ❑ Helpful to have a friend or family member present in the room to remember details provided by nurse and surgeon
- ❑ You may be asked to walk before you feel ready. Walking will help you recover more quickly and help decrease complications.
- ❑ Main tasks for patients in the hospital are: rest, hydrate, control pain, ask questions



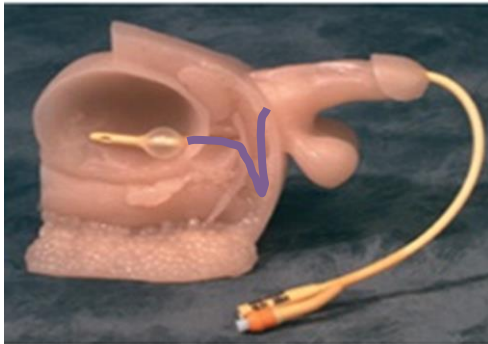
A Note About Pain

- It is normal to experience pain and discomfort after surgery
- Stress associated with untreated and excessive pain can prevent healing
- While you are in the hospital, communicate with your nursing team about your pain level
- Before you are discharged you will be tapered to oral pain medication.
- Discuss past negative experiences with pain medication or addiction history with your surgeon.
 - DO NOT take NSAIDS (ibuprofen, aspirin, Aleve) for pain for the first 7-10 days.
 - DO NOT take Tylenol in addition to prescribed pain medications

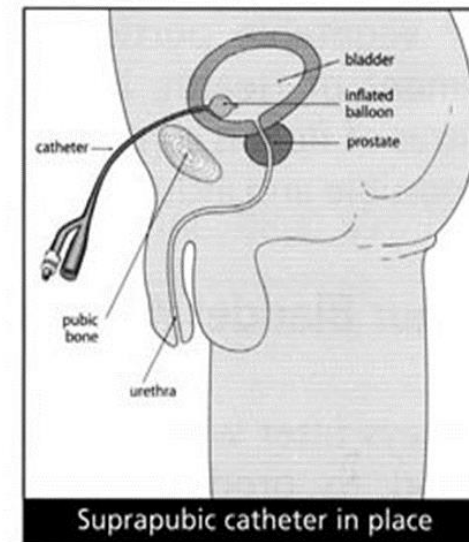


Catheter

- ❑ Patients having metoidioplasty or phalloplasty **with urethral lengthening** will have a two catheters placed during surgery
- ❑ A catheter allows you to empty your bladder without using your urethra



❑ Foley



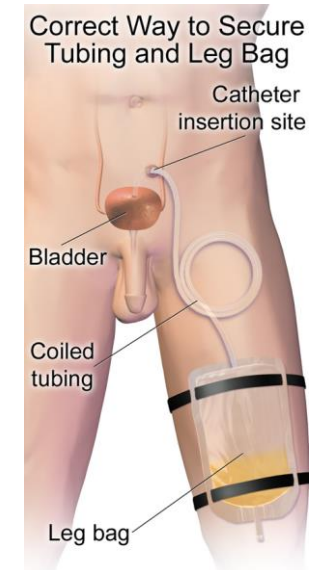
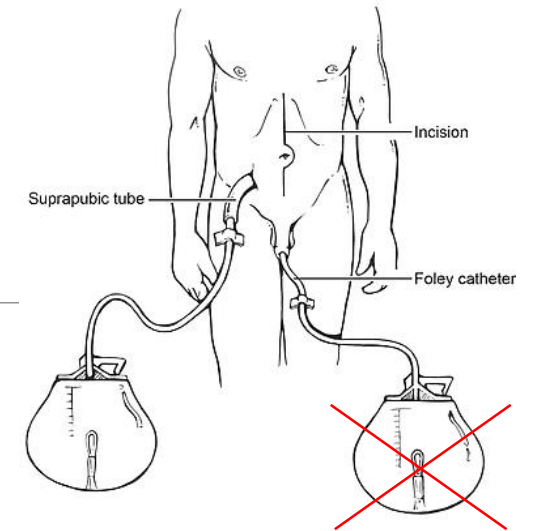
❑ Suprapubic

Catheter

- ❑ **Foley catheter** is usually removed after 1 week
- ❑ **Suprapubic catheter**
 - ❑ Usually in for minimum of 6 weeks after surgery
 - ❑ The catheter will have a tube running from your bladder outside your body connected to a bag
 - ❑ The catheter bag will need to be emptied into the toilet when it is full (at least every 4-5 hours)
 - ❑ Wash hands before handling the catheter
 - ❑ Clean area around catheter with soap and water at least 1x per day

Normal Issues with Catheters:

- ❑ Bladder spasms (uncomfortable but not an emergency)
- ❑ Drainage around insertion site is normal (can be mucus-like)

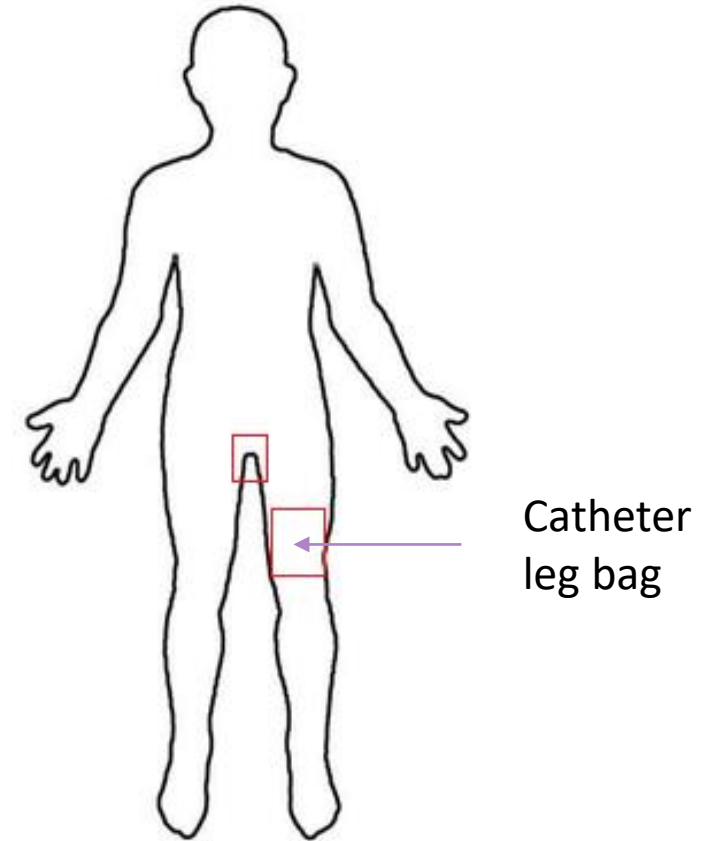


Hospital Discharge: Phalloplasty Urethral Lengthening Stage 1 & Meta w/ UL

- ❑ 1st stage phalloplasty with urethral lengthening is very similar to metoidioplasty with urethral lengthening. Post-op care is usually the same.

What is on you when you're discharged:

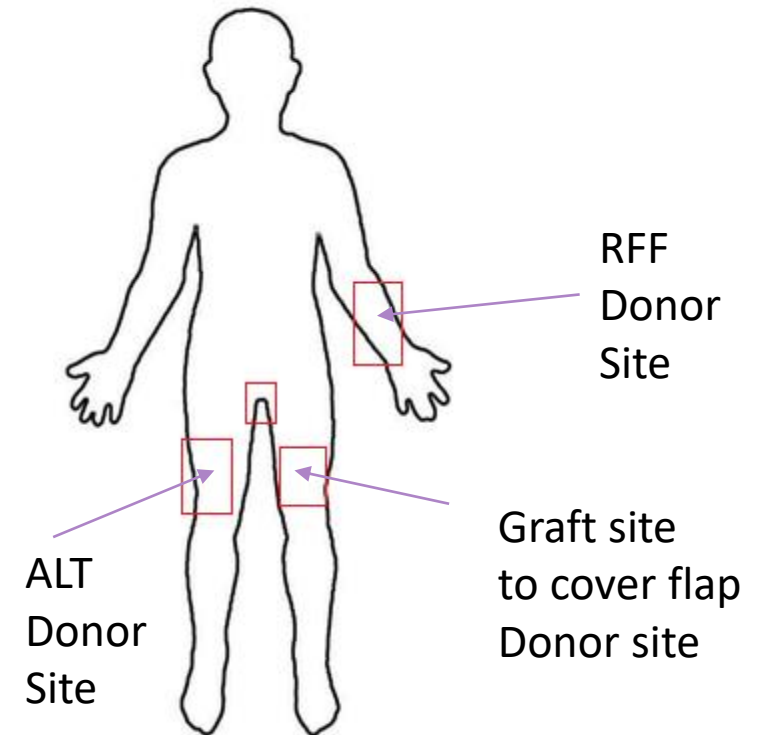
- ❑ Penile dressing (gauze)
- ❑ Suprapubic catheter and catheter bag
- ❑ Foley catheter with plug (no bag attached)



Hospital Discharge: Phalloplasty Flap Stage

What is on you when you're discharged:

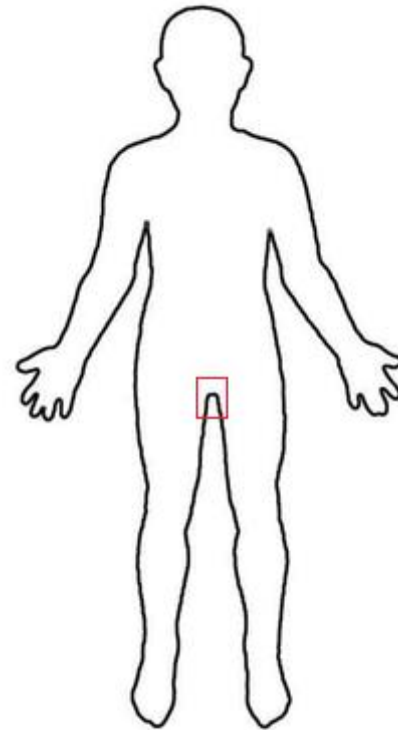
- Groin Dressing
 - Penile Dressing
 - Suprapubic catheter and catheter bag
 - Arm splint (if forearm flap)
 - Splint stays on for 1 month, then physical therapy and splint on at night
 - Thigh gauze and wrap (on 2 sides if thigh flap)
 - Foley catheter with plug (no bag attached)
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- Patients who have thigh flap may need wheelchair, cane, or walker to assist with mobility; toilet bars for assistance on and off toilet



Meta w/o UL: Hospital Discharge

What is on you when you're discharged:

- Penile Dressing



Hospital Discharge

- ❑ You will need someone to drive you home from surgery
- ❑ You will need someone to be present when you are given discharge instructions
 - ❑ Anesthesia impairs short term memory functioning

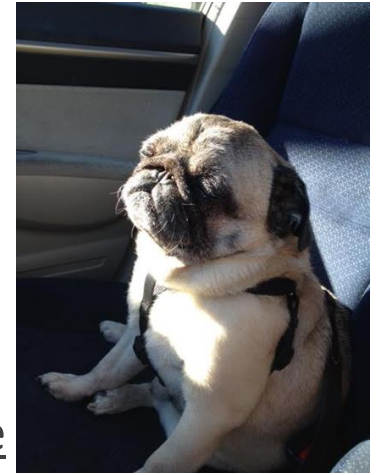


Recovery Comparison

	Meta w/ UL	Meta w/o UL	1 st stage Phallo (RFF) (similar to meta w/ UL)	Flap Stage Phallo	Implants
Initial Recovery	6-8 weeks	2-3 weeks	6-8 weeks	6-8 weeks	3-4 weeks
No Activity Restrictions	2-3 months	6 weeks	2-3 months	2-3 months	6 weeks
Back to Baseline	3-6 months	3-4 months	3-6 months	4 months	2-3 months
Follow-up Appts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Caregiving Needs

- Plan for a caregiver around the clock for about 3-5 days after discharge from the hospital.
 - May need less round the clock care for metoidioplasty without urethral lengthening and implants and more with phalloplasty flap stage
- Have *at least* one identified caregiver in place. If you can, identify a team of caregivers so no one caregiver is overwhelmed and each caregiver can provide care based on their strengths
- You will need help with lifting, laundry, cleaning, meal preparation, errands and care for children and pets for *at least* 3-4 weeks after surgery; you may need more for phalloplasty flap stage (4-6 weeks)
- You may need help with personal care including help in the bathroom with showering and cleaning.
- It is common for patients to think they have more strength than they actually do in the first few months after surgery. **Taking it slow at first is important.**



Recovery Considerations

- ❑ In the first 2-3 months after surgery it is important to avoid positions that put stress on incisions and cut off blood supply to the phallus
 - ❑ Avoid crouching and sitting with your knees hugged to your chest
- ❑ Important to keep wound sites dry; phallus elevated in first few weeks after flap stage
- ❑ Dressing changes (gauze and xeroform gauze 1x daily)



Meta & Phallo: Normal Healing

- ❑ **Pain**
- ❑ **Swelling:** Expect quite a bit of swelling for a few months post operatively. Sudden swelling requires urgent attention.
- ❑ **Nausea/vomiting:** Common reaction to anesthesia as well as narcotic pain medications.
- ❑ **Itching:** Common reaction to anesthesia as well as narcotic pain medications. Also can be caused by adhesive dressings.
- ❑ **Constipation:** Take stool softeners to minimize strain and pressure to the genital area
- ❑ **Blood in the urine for up to 6 weeks:** As your new urethra heals and as long as you have a catheter in place, it is normal to have some blood and bladder debris in your urine bag.
- ❑ **Incontinence of urine:** While your neo-urethra is swollen, it is normal to have some incontinence (leaking) particularly when you are straining like having a BM or coughing/sneezing. Leaking through your urethra can happen even when you have your Supra Pubic Catheter to drainage bag. The urethra can remain swollen for up 12 weeks.

Wound Care

- ❑ Important to keep wound sites dry
- ❑ Change all dressings 1x per day
- ❑ After flap stage phalloplasty:
 - ❑ Keep phallus elevated in first few weeks
 - ❑ Daily dressing changes (gauze & xeroform gauze 1x daily)
 - ❑ No showering for 10-14 days until cleared by surgeon
 - ❑ Compression for forearm once cleared by surgeon to assist with lymph drainage



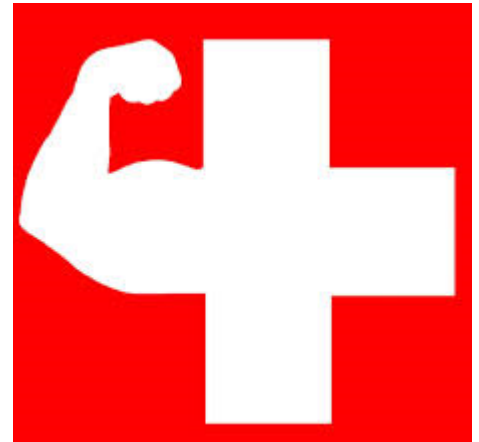
What to do if you have a concern?

- First, contact your surgeon and review symptoms
 - Surgeon may want to see you at the office
- KP Advice Nurse: 415-833-2200
 - Ask nurse to page on call plastic surgeon at KP SF
- If surgeon tells you to go to the emergency room:
 - Go to your nearest Kaiser ER
 - Tell the ER doctor that you've had surgery
 - Ask them to contact your surgeon and the San Francisco Kaiser Plastic Surgery Department



Physical Therapy: Phalloplasty Only

- Standard for patients who have radial forearm flap phalloplasty to assure healing in forearm
 - Promote range of motion
 - Rebuild strength
- Possible to obtain referral for physical therapy after ALT to restore strength and gait
- Physical therapy takes place at nearest Kaiser to you that has therapy available
- Physical therapy is typically started 3 weeks after surgery
 - Patients are cleared by microsurgeons prior to start of therapy
 - Typically need 2-3 months of hand therapy
 - Compression garment on forearm worn for ~1 year after surgery



Resuming Activities after Surgery

- Each person's healing is different
- Listen to your body and if hurts, use caution or stop!
- General guideline is wait **at least** 6 weeks before restarting moderate activities and obtain clearance from surgeon
- Check in with surgeon about time before driving, swimming, taking a bath, bike riding, strenuous exercise, and sexual activity
- Best to abstain from all nicotine and not to even be around cigarette smoke for 1 month. If resuming nicotine use, wait **at least** one month and avoid excessive alcohol intake.



Sexual Health after Surgery

- Discovering changes to sexuality, sexual sensation, and pleasure after surgery can take time
- Exploring what feels good on your own can help you have information to share with your partners
- If anything hurts, slow down, breathe, and listen to your body
- Just like anyone else who has sex, people who have had phalloplasty can also get or transmit a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or HIV.
 - Some STIs are transmitted through skin to skin contact
 - Some STIs are transmitted through fluid exchange

A Note About Sex

- Device called “Elator” to assist with rigidity after surgery before implant.
- Using a few condoms can also assist with rigidity
- Works best after glansplasty
- <http://www.theelator.com/>
- Confirm with surgeon when it's ok to use after surgery



Sexual Health Tips

- Just like anyone else who has sex, people who have had phalloplasty can also get or transmit a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or HIV.
 - Some STIs are transmitted through skin to skin contact
 - Some STIs are transmitted through fluid exchange
- HIV and STI testing is recommended every 3-6 months if you're sexually active
 - You don't need an order from your PCP to get HIV testing done. Drop-in at any KP lab.
- Methods to reduce HIV and STI transmission:
 - Condoms and lube
 - Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
 - Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)
 - Treatment as Prevention (TasP)