

## Gynaecology / Day Surgery Unit

# Tension-Free Vaginal Tape (TVT) Procedure

Stress incontinence in women can cause frequent involuntary release of urine during activities that put pressure on your bladder, such as coughing or laughing. The **tension-free vaginal tape** procedure is designed to provide support for a sagging urethra (a thin tube that carries urine from the bladder out of the body) so that when you cough or move vigorously or suddenly, the urethra can remain closed with no accidental release of urine.

### The procedure

- The operation is usually carried out under a spinal anaesthetic that works throughout the procedure so that you should feel no pain.
- Two small incisions (cuts) are made in the skin of the abdomen (stomach) and one incision is made in the vagina, just beneath the urethra. A small channel is made on each side of the urethra; this will allow a special instrument to fit a tape underneath the urethra.
- This tape will stay in place completely without tension, supporting the urethra just like a hammock. It offers support during straining, so there is no leakage of urine.
- The surgeon can check that the procedure has been successful during the operation by asking you to cough, and can check that you have become continent. After this check the wounds are sutured.
- The operation takes about 30-45 minutes. Although you will have a urinary catheter (a small drain inserted into the bladder) placed during the procedure, it is most likely that this will be removed before you return to the ward.

### After the procedure

- Usually within hours of your surgery, you will be asked to urinate to test the response of your bladder and urethra to the surgery.
- You may experience abdominal discomfort/ pain after your operation. You may take some mild painkillers as prescribed.
- There will be stitches in the abdomen and these normally dissolve by themselves, 10-14 days after the procedure.
- The stitches in the vagina are also dissolvable and after a few weeks you may notice them as they come out in small pieces.
- Good hygiene is important, try to have a shower rather than a bath. Keep the wounds and vaginal area clean to allow the incisions in the vagina to heal properly and prevent infection.

- You can go home the same day as your operation, providing you can pass urine and feel well enough.
- You will normally need to take two weeks off work, but this may be extended depending on the type of work you do.
- You should avoid heavy lifting for four to six weeks during the recovery period as strain could cause the leakage problem to return. Strenuous activities and exercise should be avoided for six weeks.
- Sexual intercourse may be resumed after four weeks and when vaginal discharge has stopped.

## Further Information

If you are worried about your condition, contact one of the following:

- |                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Addenbrooke's Day Surgery Unit | 01223 256330 |
| 2. Ely Day Surgery Unit           | 01223 652279 |
| 3. Your Consultant's registrar    | 01223 245151 |
| 4. Your General Practitioner (GP) |              |

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

Potete chiedere di ottenere queste informazioni in altre lingue, in stampato grande o in audiocassetta.

### Italian

若你需要本信息的繁體中文、大字體或音訊格式的版本，請要求索取。

### Cantonese

તમને આ માહિતી બીજી ભાષાઓમાં, મોટા અક્ષરોમાં અથવા સાંભળી શકાય એવા માધ્યમ (ઓડીઓ ફોર્મેટ)માં જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો.

### Gujarati

تکایہ پرسیار بگہ نہ گہر نہ وزانیاریہت دہوی بہ زمانیکی تر ، بہ پیتی گہورہ یانیش بہ شیوہی دہنگ

### Kurdish

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات دوسری زبانوں میں، بڑے الفاظ کی اشاعت میں یا آڈیو ٹیپ پر درکار ہوں تو براۓ مہربانی اس کیلئے درخواست کریں۔

### Urdu



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. Please do not smoke anywhere on the site.  
For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free, 0800 169 0 169

## Document History

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