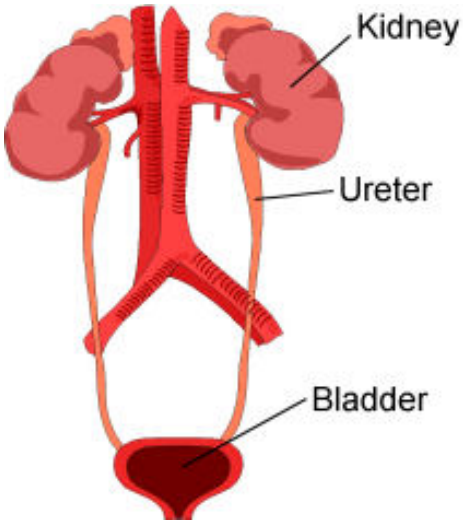
Ureteral Colic
(Kidney Stones)

Your pain is caused by a stone located in the urinary tract system. These are the tubes that collect the urine from your kidneys and deliver it to your bladder. These stones usually pass through the urinary tract and are expelled in the urine. The intense pain is caused by stone movement in those tubes when the ureter goes into spasm around the stone. **This pain (ureteral colic)** is an *intermittent* pain. It is the result of obstruction to the hollow opening of the ureter. It comes and goes as the ureter contracts around the stone. The pain is usually located in the back and belly (*abdomen*). It is an intense, sharp, stabbing pain. It begins up high near the kidney and gradually moves down the ureter. When the stone is ready to pass into the bladder the pain is often located in the lower abdomen on the side the stone is located. Once the pain is located here it often passes into the bladder and disappears completely. Once the stone is in the bladder, it can pass out in the urine. This happens because the opening out of the bladder is larger than the path the stone has come down through the ureters. While the stone is passing, some relief can be obtained by pressing down on the area of pain with your hands or pressing a pillow down over the area. There is no certain position you can get in to give yourself pain relief.



TREATMENT

- Your caregiver will provide you with medications for pain relief.
- You may require specialized follow-up x-rays. The absence of pain does not always mean that the stone has passed. It may have just stopped moving. If the urine remains completely obstructed, it can cause loss of kidney function or even complete destruction of the involved kidney. It is your responsibility and in your interest that x-rays and follow-ups as suggested by your caregiver are completed. Relief of pain without passage of the stone can be associated with **severe damage to the kidney, including loss of kidney function** on that side.
- If your stone does not pass on its own, additional measures may be taken by your caregiver to ensure its removal.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Increase your fluid intake.
- Strain all urine. A strainer will be provided. Keep all particulate matter or stones for your caregiver to inspect. In spite of the intense pain the stone causes it may be smaller than a BB (4.35 mm in diameter).
- Take your pain medication as directed.
- Make a follow-up appointment with your caregiver as directed.
- Remember that the goal is passage of your stone. The absence of pain in and of itself is not the endpoint. Silent obstruction can and does happen. To avoid the serious consequences of such obstruction, it is absolutely necessary to abide by the plan to which you and your physician have agreed.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- Pain cannot be controlled with the prescribed medication.
- Fever develops. Backed up urine is more likely to become infected. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Pain continues for longer than your doctor advises it should.
- There is a change in the pain, and you develop chest discomfort or constant abdominal pain.
- You feel faint or pass out.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 06/05/2009 Document Re-Released: 10/15/2010
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