

Information for Patients



ATOMS Sling



What is an ATOMS sling?

The ATOMS sling (Adjustable transobturator male sling) is an anchored adjustable suburethral cushion used to treat male urinary incontinence. It is able to treat more severe degrees of incontinence. It can be adjusted to allow a perfect balance between flow and continence.

Why do I need an ATOMS sling?

A sphincter is a muscle structure which controls the flow of bodily fluids such as urine. A normal sphincter prevents urine from leaking, however sometimes the sphincter fails and urine leaks out making you incontinent.

It is quite common to become temporarily incontinent after undergoing prostate surgery. Usually incontinence stops within a few months after your body has recovered from surgery. However if your incontinence persists, you may be offered an ATOMS sling.

What happens before my operation?

10 days before your operation, blood and urine test need to be done.

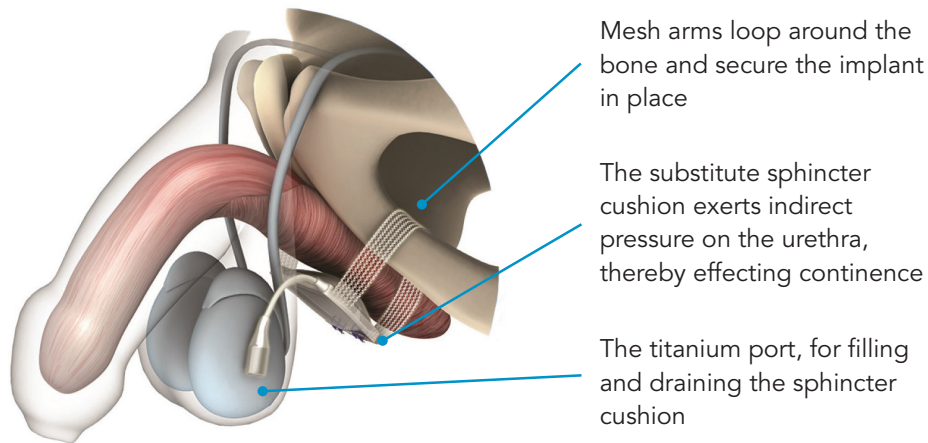
You will be contacted by the hospital regarding your admission time and to confirm fasting instructions.

Complete all your hospital admission forms at least 5 days prior to your operation.

What happens during my operation?

The sling is made of inert polypropylene (synthetic mesh) and a soft silicone cushion. Your Urologist makes an incision between your scrotum and anus. The sling is inserted through the scrotal incision and placed under the urethra. The small port which allows post-operative adjustments to be made is placed through the same incision into the scrotum.

A catheter is placed to help in urination and the wounds are closed with dissolving stitches. The procedure takes about an hour on average.



What to expect after my operation

You will be discharged the following day.

When the operation is completed, you will go to the recovery room for a short while where you will be cared for until you are ready to be transferred to your room.

The catheter may be removed first thing in the morning. Once you have passed satisfactory amounts of urine you can go home.

After discharge

Because there is a risk of the sling slipping it is very important to not do anything strenuous for the first 6 weeks, taking particular care not to do anything which requires you to have your legs apart.

You should expect to take a week or two off work, depending on what you do. Heavy lifting, straining, or strenuous activity should be avoided for 4-6 weeks after surgery. You can gradually return to light activities over 6 weeks then full activities after 3 months.

You may also feel more tired during your recovery period and perhaps a bit low, but as you start to recover you should find this improves.

Generally when you feel that you could perform an emergency stop without being concerned about pain (at about 2 weeks), then you can resume driving.

Possible complications

Wound

- Contact the Urology Associates nurse if you have any concerns about your wound.

Infection

- A urine infection is uncommon after this operation. If you are concerned, see your GP or nurse for a urine test.

Difficulty passing urine

- An inability to pass urine immediately after the catheter is removed. This occurs in about 5% of cases. If you are unable to pass urine the catheter will be replaced and re-moved again after a few days.

Uncommon complications

- Less than 5% of patients will develop some scrotal numbness or discomfort. In most this is transient.

Continued incontinence

- Most men will achieve a good result after this operation.
- The ATOMS sling can be topped up until continence has been achieved.

Topping up your ATOMS sling

Around half of men will become continent (no longer leaking urine) immediately after the surgery. The remaining half will need one or more top-up procedures. This is not a sign of failure but a normal part of the function of this sling.

A top-up is a simple procedure done in the urology clinic, just like a blood test. A small amount of saline (salty water) is injected into the scrotal port - this connects to the silicone cushion under the urethra and assists continence. Some men will need several top-ups to achieve the best result.

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