

## Common Questions about the Penile Implant

### **What is erectile dysfunction?**

- Erectile dysfunction or E.D. is the inability to achieve or maintain erection for satisfactory intercourse. Most men with E.D. will complain their erections are not as firm as they used to be or that they don't last as long.

### **I have tried the pills and they used to work. But over time, they have become less and less effective. What other options are there?**

- Viagra, Levitra, Stendra and Cialis are medications that have revolutionized the treatment E.D. However, they can become ineffective over time. Some men have to stop taking them due to side effects. There are other treatments including vacuum erection devices (VED), injection of medicine into the penis (Caverject or Edex), or using a urethral suppository (Muse). The treatment with the highest rate of patient satisfaction is the internal penile pump.

### **Will there be anything on the outside of my body?**

- No. The penile implant is entirely concealed inside your body.

### **Will others be able to tell I have had surgery?**

- No. Others will not be able to tell you have an implant. Men with implants can go to the gym and shower without other people being aware that the man has had surgery. The only difference is in the flaccid state. A penis with an implant will appear longer than a penis without an implant when flaccid (not inflated).

### **How long does it take to get an erection?**

- It takes less than a minute to inflate the implant and achieve a full erection. Using the pills, you have to think about timing of intercourse. How long will it take to work? How long will it last? Will I get a good enough erection? With a penile implant, you will no longer have those concerns.

### **What is the implant made of?**

- The inflatable penile implant is made of flexible and durable silicone-like plastic. It has four components: two paired inflatable cylinders that go in the penis, a pump hidden in the scrotum that is used to inflate and deflate the implant, and a saline reservoir cylinder that is hidden behind the pubic bone in the lower abdomen.

### **Will having the implant change the feeling of my penis during sex?**

- No. Men who have had the internal penile pump report that sexual intercourse feels completely normal to them. The implant is inside the penis. The nerves giving sensation to the penis remain the same so sexual stimulation feels the same as does the feeling of orgasm and ejaculation.

### **Will an implant make it feel different for my partner?**

- No. Nothing changes how the penis feels to your partner. In fact, some women cannot tell that the man has had an implant. Partner satisfaction rates are reported to be very high.

### **Can an implant be used to make my penis longer?**

- No. The implant will not make the penis longer. It can, however, improve the girth (or diameter) of the penis. You can get an estimate of your penis length after an internal penile pump by stretching your

flaccid (non-erect) penis out gently. There are advances in prosthetic surgery that allow Dr. Thompson to optimize what length you have. The implant will be left inflated just after surgery for two weeks to promote stretching of the penis. Early cycling (after the 2 week postop appointment) will also promote length.

**Will I need to do any maintenance on the implant?**

- No. The implant is maintenance-free. Once you heal from the insertion, you simply inflate it when you want to use it, and deflate it when you are finished.

**How much pain will I have after surgery?**

- The first 7 – 14 days after surgery, patients should expect some pain and bruising. This is treated with cold packs and pain medications. After 2 weeks, the pain should be resolved or much improved.

**When will I learn how to use the implant?**

- Usually after 2 weeks, Dr. Thompson will teach you how to inflate and deflate the implant. Depending on how you are healing, she may ask you to inflate it for a thirty minutes twice a day. This can help maintain penis length. You should NOT use the implant for sex until after you have fully healed, usually 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.

**How long will the implant last?**

- As with any mechanical device, malfunction can occur but is quite rare. Most implants last 10 years. If the implant malfunctions, we can replace it. Some patients have had implants work for over 20 years.

**I have diabetes. Will that prevent me from having an implant?**

- Absolutely not. About 50% of men getting implants have diabetes. The risk of infection is slightly higher in diabetic men, but it is still very uncommon.

**What is Peyronie's Disease?**

- Peyronie's Disease is a disease that causes curvature of the penis during erection. It can be painful to get an erection, especially when it first presents. In this common disease, there is scarring of part of the penis that prevents that portion of the penis from stretching normally during erection. This is what causes the penis to be bent. Some patients suffer from both E.D. and Peyronie's Disease. These patients are good candidates for a penile implant. The implant can be used to straighten the penis as well as cure the E.D.

**I had a radical prostatectomy, now I can't have an erection. Will an implant work for me?**

- Yes. Many men who have had prostate surgery, radiation, or cryotherapy suffer from erectile dysfunction (E.D.). These men are also good candidates for a penile implant. If the erections have not returned one year after surgery, they are not likely to return. These men should strongly consider an implant.

**I have not had erections since my surgery, and now my penis seems to be getting shorter and shorter. Why is this happening?**

- We know from studies that the absence of erections (such as after prostate surgery) can cause fibrosis or scarring of the penis. This fibrosis shortens the penis. If you start treatment early, you will have better preservation of his penis length and a better chance of regaining erections once the nerves heal.

**Is there a risk for infection in the implant?**

- Yes, the risk of getting an infection of the penile implant is about 1-2%. We go to great lengths in the operating room to prevent implant infections. Patient with certain risk factors may have a higher risk of

infection. If the implant becomes infected, it must be removed and replaced later after the infection is gone.

**How long does the surgery take?**

- The implant surgery usually takes about 45 to 60 minutes to complete.

**Will my insurance pay for the implant surgery?**

- Medicare covers the surgery completely except for the co-pay. Other insurances often pay but it depends on your contract with the insurance company. Our office will help find out if your insurance covers the implant surgery and will provide you with a letter on medical necessity and help you with an appeal if they at first deny coverage.

**When can I go home after surgery?**

- Most men have surgery as an outpatient and go home the same day.

**What kind of anesthesia will I have?**

- The implant can be done under spinal or general anesthesia.

**How long will I need to recover after the implant surgery?**

- Most men will need to take about 2 weeks off work. If you have a desk job, you may be able to go back earlier.

- It may take up to 3 to 6 weeks before you will be released to perform vigorous exercise. However, walking is OK as soon it is comfortable to do so (usually after 2 weeks).