



# HALTON UROLOGY

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## **What is an open radical prostatectomy?**

A radical prostatectomy is the surgical removal of the entire prostate for prostate cancer. The seminal vesicles and some of the pelvic lymph nodes may also be removed.

An incision is made in the lower part of the abdomen, between the navel and the pubic bone. The surgery will be completed through this incision. The surgery will include the removal of the entire prostate, the associated seminal vesicles, and some of the pelvic lymph nodes to see whether cancer has spread into these nodes. After removal of the relevant organs, the surgeon will reconnect the urethra to the bladder so that urinary function is restored.

After the surgery, most patients stay in hospital for one to two days after an open radical prostatectomy. All patients will initially require a urinary catheter (a tube that runs up through the penis into the bladder). The primary reason for the catheter is to ensure healing of the connection between the bladder and the urethra in the proper anatomical position (the tube will be removed after around 7-10 days). Pain after an open radical prostatectomy is generally quite mild and likened to having performed several abdominal crunches. It can be controlled with prescription pain medications.

Once the catheter is removed, all patients will experience temporary incontinence (loss of bladder control) and impotence (loss of erections). A high level of urinary control will start to return within weeks or a couple of months. However, recovery of erectile function normally takes significantly longer.

### **Risks of open radical prostatectomy can include:**

- **Infection:** any incision poses a risk of infection however this is minimised by administering antibiotics post operatively.
- **Bleeding:** this is minimal during Open Prostatectomy and very rarely would a blood transfusion be needed.
- **Incontinence (loss of urine without control):** once the catheter is removed you may experience some incontinence particularly when coughing. You may need to wear pads in your underwear initially. The length of time this is required varies but, in most cases, is resolved within 3-6 months.

**Impotence (loss of erections):** even if the nerves that control erections are preserved it is likely that there will be a degree of impotence. However in virtually all cases potency can be regained with the use of tablets, injection therapy, vacuum devices or implants.