

Frequently asked questions

- Q. Are there other options?
- A. The decision to have surgery for male incontinence is a personal one. Some men will choose to continue Kegel exercise or live with their leakage. Working with a pelvic floor physical therapist can also help build strength. For men with moderate to severe urinary leakage, the artificial urinary sphincter (AUS) is an excellent alternative.
- Q. Can I have an AUS placed if the sling doesn't work?
- A. Some men will choose to "try" the sling, even if they are not a perfect candidate. If the sling does not achieve your continence goals, the AUS can still be safely placed in the future.
- Q. What are the risks of surgery?
- A. All surgeries carry a small risk of bleeding, infection, and injury to adjacent organs. In very rare cases, the mesh can "erode" into the urethra and would need to be removed. Some men will have difficulty emptying the bladder after sling placement and might need to self catheterize temporarily.
- Q. Isn't mesh dangerous?
- A. There is an FDA warning about the use of mesh to treat a specific condition in women (prolapse). These same risks and warnings have **NOT been issued for the use of mesh in men** with urinary incontinence. The AdVance sling is **FDA approved** and generally considered to be a very safe procedure with low complication rates.

Notes

Mass General Brigham

<https://www.massgeneralbrigham.org>

Department of Urology

<https://www.brighamandwomens.org/surgery/urology>



Male Urethral Sling

A procedure for urinary incontinence

What is a urethral sling?

The **urethral sling** is a polypropylene mesh device that may help keep you dry by elevating and lengthening the part of the urethra that contains your sphincter valve. This allows the sphincter muscle to function properly.

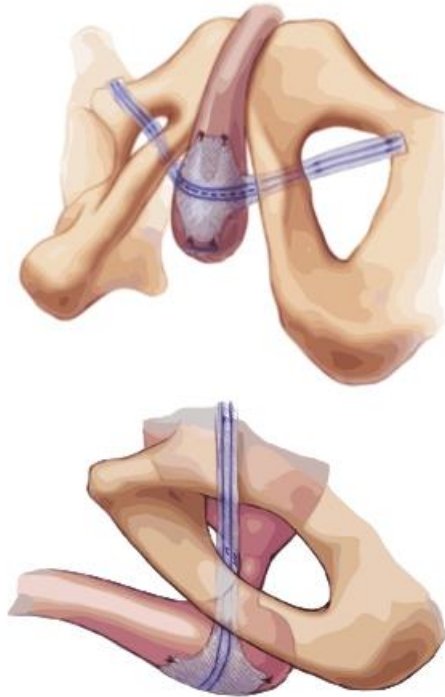
It works best in men with low volume urinary incontinence and no prior radiation therapy. It does not work well in men with very high volume of incontinence, men with scarring of the urinary sphincter, or in men with prior radiation therapy.

Do male urethral slings work?

For appropriately selected patients, the sling is highly effective. However, you may still have some leakage with strenuous activities, coughing, etc. Most men will still wear a thin pad each day for occasional leakage, and we unfortunately cannot guarantee that a man will be pad-free.

What to expect

- **AdVance sling insertion usually takes 60 minutes.** You will be put under anesthesia before the surgery. This means you will be deeply asleep and will not feel anything during the procedure.
- The device is placed through an incision in the perineum (area between scrotum and anus) and two small “pokes” in the groin.
- Once the procedure is over, you will be brought to the **PACU** (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit) to allow the anesthetic to wear off. Patients are generally allowed to go home the same day but will sometimes be asked to stay overnight.
- **Make sure you plan for a family member or friend to drive you home after the procedure.**



Preparing for surgery

- You will be scheduled for a **pre-operative appointment before** your surgery to clear you for anesthesia.
- Stop blood-thinning medications **7 days before** the procedure. Blood-thinners are medications such as Coumadin (warfarin), Eliquis, Lovenox, Plavix, etc. **Talk to your cardiologist before stopping blood- thinning medications.**
- **After midnight on the night before surgery, you may not eat any solid foods**, including candy, chewing gum, cough drops or mints.
- If your doctor told you to take your **medications** on the day of surgery, you may take them with a small sip of water.

After your procedure

- A catheter is left in place overnight after surgery. You will be instructed on how to remove this at home on the day after surgery.
- **You need to avoid lifting anything >10 pounds for 6 weeks following surgery. We recommend avoiding strenuous activity as well as those activities that result in squatting or raising the legs.**
- Increase fluid intake and eat fiber-filled foods after surgery. This will help to avoid straining during a bowel movement.
- You should plan to be out of work for at least a **week** following surgery. Your ability to return to work after surgery depends on your work requirements.

Post procedure Symptoms

These symptoms are **normal for 4-5 days** after your procedure:

- Swelling of the scrotum; try ice packs and tight-fitting underwear to minimize the swelling
- Bruising of the scrotum or lower belly
- Mild discomfort with urination

These symptoms are **abnormal**—please call the Urology clinic if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Trouble urinating
- Changes in your urine output, color, or odor
- Increasing blood or clots in your urine (dark red clots the size of a quarter or larger)
- Fever above 101° F and/or chills