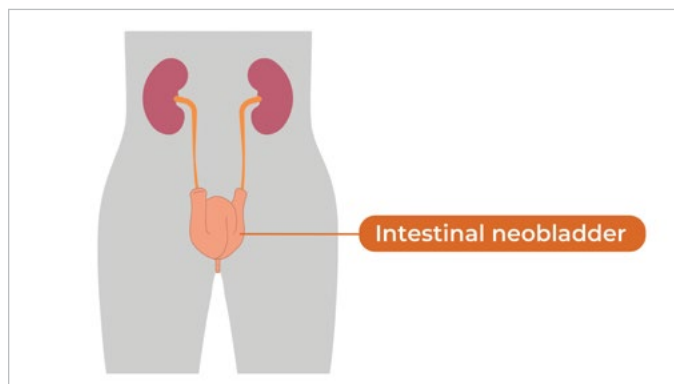


What is a neobladder?

A neobladder is a new way to store urine inside your body if your bladder is removed during surgery (called a **radical cystectomy**). It is made from a piece of your intestine. With a neobladder urinary diversion, you can still pass urine through your **urethra**, which is the same way you normally go to the bathroom.



How is a neobladder created?

Urine flows from the kidneys, through tubes called ureters, and into the bladder. After bladder removal, a piece of your small intestine is used to create a new pouch to store urine, called a neobladder. This new pouch is connected to the ureters and the tube you pee from (the urethra). Urine can still leave your body like before.

To empty the neobladder, you tighten your belly muscles and relax other muscles to push the urine out. Some people can hold urine in their neobladder, but they might need to use a small tube called a **catheter** to help drain it. A neobladder is not an option for everyone. Some people cannot have one because of their health or other treatments they've had.

ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

- *Is a neobladder the right option for me?*
- *What are the benefits and risks of a neobladder?*
- *What happens if you cannot create a neobladder during surgery?*

What will life be like with a neobladder?

- *How much leaking (**incontinence**) should I expect?*
- *What will my recovery be like?*
- *What symptoms or side effects should I watch for after surgery?*
- *How can I tell if I have a urinary tract infection (UTI)?*

What is your experience with neobladder surgeries?

TERMS TO KNOW

- **Catheter:** A tube put into the urethra to help drain urine from the bladder.
- **Chemotherapy:** Cancer treatment using special drugs.
- **Incontinence:** When you can't fully control your pee.
- **Radical Cystectomy:** Surgery to remove the bladder.
- **Ureters:** The tubes that carry urine from the kidney to the bladder.
- **Urethra:** The tube where urine leaves the body.
- **Urologist:** A doctor who treats diseases of the urinary system.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW: Advice from Bladder Cancer Patients Living with a Neobladder

BEFORE YOUR NEOBLADDER SURGERY

Ask your doctor about any special steps to follow before surgery. These may include:

- Which medications or herbal supplements to stop or avoid.
- Any limits on food and drinks

AFTER YOUR NEOBLADDER SURGERY

You can live a healthy, active life with a neobladder, but it will take time to adjust. Here is what you should know:

Getting used to your neobladder takes time and patience:

- Emptying your new bladder will not work the same way as before. You will need to learn to push urine out by using your muscles. Your healthcare team will show you how to do exercises (like pelvic floor exercises) to help with this.
- If you cannot pee right away after surgery, you may need to use a catheter to empty your bladder.
- The new bladder will start small but will stretch to hold more urine over time.

You can avoid problems with your neobladder:

- You may not feel when your new bladder is full. To avoid leaks, set a schedule to empty it regularly, even at night.
- You might experience leaking (incontinence), especially at night. Use protective pads or adult diapers and set an alarm to wake up once or twice during the night to empty your bladder.
- Empty your bladder every 3–4 hours, both day and night. This helps prevent leaks and stops chemicals from building up in the neobladder.
- Drink plenty of water to keep the neobladder “flushed.” The neobladder produces mucus (since it is made from the intestine). Staying hydrated will help clear it out. Your urine should be pale yellow if you are drinking enough.

Watch for signs of infection:

- If your urine becomes cloudy, darker, smells stronger, or has blood in it, you may have a urinary tract infection (UTI).
- Pain in your lower back can also be a sign of a UTI. If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your **urologist** right away.

SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT

- Talk to your family and friends about your neobladder, and do not hesitate to ask for help when you need it.
- There are professionals who can help with incontinence issues. A physical therapist, for example, can teach you exercises to strengthen the muscles that help control your bladder.

NEXT STEPS

- You will need blood tests from time to time to check your body’s salt levels and how your kidneys are working. Occasionally, you will also need imaging tests to make sure the cancer has not returned.
- Regular checkups are important to ensure the cancer has not spread.
- Your doctor may recommend **chemotherapy** to help stop the cancer from spreading.
- It may help to speak with someone who has gone through what you are experiencing. You can connect with a volunteer through the BCAN Survivor 2 Survivor program who has personal experience with a neobladder. Call 888-901-BCAN.



◀ Scan this QR code to learn more about cystectomies