

Use of Mesh in Surgery for Urinary Incontinence

Using mesh in surgery for urine leakage can be a complicated and controversial topic. For this reason, the Urogynecologists at Michigan Medicine have put together a list of things you should know. Most importantly, please be sure you ask all of your questions and understand what your surgery involves.

- Mesh for treatment of stress urinary incontinence is **not the same** as the “pelvic mesh kits” or “vaginal mesh” currently under FDA review.
- The primary problems after use of mesh in surgeries for urine leakage are:
 - Exposure of the mesh in the vagina later (sometimes called “extrusion” or “erosion”). The risk of mesh erosion with a sling surgery for urinary incontinence is about 2 in 100 (2%).
 - Bleeding
 - Infection
 - Scarring
 - Pain, this can include pain with sexual intercourse.
 - These problems can require complex further surgery. Complete removal of mesh can be difficult.
- Mesh material is **permanent** and will be in your body for the rest of your life. It will never completely dissolve.
- Mesh should not be used in every incontinence surgery, but can be safely placed by experienced surgeons in some situations. There is always some risk with any surgery.
- There are alternative surgeries that involve no mesh, although sometimes these have a higher risk of the leakage coming back.
- The doctors here at Michigan Medicine have each completed a residency plus specialized training to have the necessary experience and expertise to perform your surgery. Many patients with mesh-related complications are

referred here from across the entire state. We have studied and published our experience with mesh complications in medical journals.

- After surgery, if you have problems or concerns about anything you're experiencing, please call us. Open communication helps make your health care better.
- Please inform any doctors you see in the future that you've had surgery involving a mesh implant.

Where can I find more information?

For more information, you can go to:

- U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) information for patients, *Urogynecologic Surgical Mesh Implants*:
www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/ImplantsandProsthetics/UroGynSurgicalMesh/.
- American Urogynecologic Society information for patients,
 - *Stress Urinary Incontinence*: <https://www.augs.org/assets/2/6/SUI.pdf>

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