

# Urethral Bulking Agent

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## What is a urethral bulking agent?

A **urethral bulking agent** such as Bulkamid, is a material that a urologist injects into the urethral wall for treating urinary incontinence. The bulking agent increases the resistance of the urethra and helps prevent urine loss due to physical activities such as coughing, laughing and exercise.

## How is a bulking agent injected?

Your urethra will first be numbed with a topical gel called Lidocaine. Your doctor will then insert a special cystoscope equipped with a fine needle into your bladder. A numbing medication (Lidocaine) may also be injected near the bladder neck. This will be followed by the bulking agent.

## What are the expectations?

The bulking agent should improve the urinary leakage by 50% and last for 3 to 9 months. However, over time the symptoms will gradually return. For Bulkamid about 2 out of 3 women report feeling cured or improved up to 7 years following their injection. However, 1 in 5 women may undergo another treatment for incontinence within 7 years following injection of Bulkamid.

## What are the risks?

Even though an incision is not made urethral bulking agents are considered an invasive procedure. All the bulking agents are considered artificial implants and many will persist in the urethra after the effectiveness of the treatment wears off. Bulking agents are generally a safe treatment with little long-term risks. There are certain risks that may occur which include but are not limited to: urinary tract infections, persistent urethral bleeding, pain on urination, new urinary urgency, more incontinence, erosion of implanted material, and injury

to the urethra.

Side effects include difficulty with urination immediately after the injection, blood in the urine, and some temporary burning after urination. These side effects generally last less than 24 hours.

### **When should I call for help?**

- Contact the Department of Urology at (734) 936-7030 during working hours (8:00 am - 5:00pm) if you develop any signs of urinary infection such as:
  - Fever of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
  - Chills
  - Persistent burning with urination
  - Persistent blood in the urine
- If you have concerns, questions, or a change in symptoms after business hours or on weekends, please call (734) 936-6267 and ask to speak with the Urology Resident on call.
- If you need to be evaluated by a doctor on an emergent basis, please go to the nearest ER and have the ER doctor contact the University of Michigan for assistance.

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