

# Transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate

**Understanding NICE guidance –  
information for people considering the  
procedure, and for the public**

October 2003



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**Transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate**  
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Copies of this booklet can be ordered from the NHS Response Line; telephone 0870 1555 455 and quote reference number N0316. A version in Welsh and English is also available, reference number N0317. Mae fersiwn yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg ar gael hefyd, rhif cyfeirnod N0317. The NICE interventional procedures guidance on which this information is based is available from the NICE website ([www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)). Copies can also be obtained from the NHS Response Line, reference number N0315.

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## About this information

This information describes the guidance that the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has issued to the NHS on a procedure called **transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate**. It is not a complete description of what is involved in the procedure – the patient’s healthcare team should describe it in detail.

NICE has looked at whether transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate is safe enough and works well enough for it to be used routinely for men with benign prostatic obstruction (often shortened to BPO).

To produce this guidance, NICE has:

- looked at the results of studies on the safety of transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate and how well it works
- asked experts for their opinion
- asked the views of the organisations that speak for the healthcare professionals and the patients and carers who will be affected by the guidance.

This guidance is part of NICE’s work on ‘interventional procedures’ (see ‘Further information’ on the last page).

## About transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate

The prostate is a small gland that sits under a man's bladder and around his urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the end of the penis). As men get older it is common for their prostate gland to get larger. This can cause problems with passing urine because as the prostate gets bigger, it can press on the urethra and interfere with the passage of urine. This condition is called benign prostatic obstruction (BPO).

Transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate is a procedure used to destroy some of the prostate with the aim of improving flow through the urethra. It involves using a high-voltage electrical current to vaporise some of the prostate and seal the bleeding. A narrow tube called a catheter is inserted and left in place at the end of the procedure so that urine can be passed while the area heals.

The standard surgical treatment for BPO is to cut away the middle of the enlarged prostate. This operation is called transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP for short).

## *How well it works*

### **What the studies said**

Transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate is quite an established procedure. In the studies NICE looked at, it was found to work as well as the standard operation (TURP) in the short term.

### **What the experts said**

The experts said that it is not known how long the effects of this operation will last. They also stated that it probably works best for men whose prostates are still quite small.

## ***Risks and possible problems***

### **What the studies said**

The studies showed that men having transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate seem to have the same amount of problems afterwards as men having the standard operation (TURP). But some studies said that this new procedure causes less bleeding than TURP. One study found that men who'd had the newer procedure felt that they needed to urinate more often afterwards and that this lasted for some time after they'd had the procedure.

### **What the experts said**

The experts had no particular concerns about the safety of this newer procedure. But one expert said that bleeding after the operation and metabolic conditions (affecting the body's chemical balance) were possible problems.

## What has NICE decided about transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate?

NICE has considered the evidence on transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate. It has recommended that when doctors use the procedure for men with BPO, they should be sure that:

- the man understands what is involved and agrees to the treatment, and
- the results of the treatment are monitored.



## What the decision means for you

Your doctor may have offered you transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate. NICE has considered this procedure because it is relatively new. NICE has decided that the procedure is safe enough and works well enough for use in the NHS. Nonetheless you should understand the benefits and risks of transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate before you agree (consent) to it. Your doctor should discuss the benefits and risks with you. Some of these benefits and risks may be described above.

## Further information

You have the right to be fully informed and to share in decision-making about the treatment you receive. You may want to discuss this guidance with the doctors and nurses looking after you.

You can visit the NICE website ([www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)) for further information about the National Institute for Clinical Excellence and the Interventional Procedures Programme. A copy of the full guidance on transurethral electrovaporisation of the prostate is on the NICE website ([www.nice.org.uk/IPG014guidance](http://www.nice.org.uk/IPG014guidance)), or you can order a copy from the website or by telephoning the NHS Response Line on 0870 1555 455 and quoting reference number N0315. The evidence that NICE considered in developing this guidance is also available from the NICE website.

If you want more information on the prostate, a good starting point is NHS Direct, telephone 0845 4647, or NHS Direct Online ([www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)).

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