

## Tension Free Vaginal Tape Procedure

At this stage you should have had discussions over treatment options for your incontinence with your doctor and it has been decided that you will undergo the TVT (tension free vaginal tape) procedure. The operation will be done under a spinal anaesthetic so that although you will be awake, you will not feel anything from the waist down. Three small incisions will be made, one in each groin and one in front of the vagina. Each of these will be about one cm. long. The groin incisions will be so low that you need to shave the top half of your pubic hair. Using a special needle the tape will be inserted from below and brought out through the holes in your groin. Your bladder will be filled and we use a telescope to check that all is well before asking you to cough. We will then gradually tighten the tape until you no longer leak when coughing. The tape will be trimmed to size and three incisions closed with dissolvable stitches. If you are able to pass water effectively you should be able to go home the day of your operation. Occasionally you may take a bit longer to pass water and have to stay in until you are passing water successfully.

### Recovery Period

You may feel a bit 'bruised and battered' down below for two weeks or so and there may be some bleeding from the vagina. Simple pain killers should be all that you require, but if you need anything stronger, it will be given to you before you go home. You should take things easy for the first week and do no heavy lifting for two weeks. You can be back to normal activity four weeks after the operation.

### Side effects and Outlook

Apart from feeling bruised the main risks to the operation are of a degree of urgency (having to rush to the toilet) which may last for a few months after the operation and can be treated with drugs. The risk is less than 5%. The other major side effect would be an inability to pass water if the tape is adjusted too tight. This is very unlikely and certainly under 1% but if it were to happen we would teach you to empty your bladder by means of a small catheter which you slip in and out as required. There is a very small risk that if the tape slips after it has been inserted, you may feel a dragging pain, but this can be overcome by cutting the tape.

The long term outlook for this operation is very good with 82% success rate at one year and five years after the operation 80% are still successful.

Having read this leaflet if you have any queries you should discuss these with your surgeon.