



Southwest Urologic  
SPECIALISTS, PC

## Shock Wave Lithotripsy

### The Urinary Tract

The **urinary tract** helps rid the body of liquid waste. The **kidneys** filter the blood of waste chemicals and extra water. This makes **urine**. Urine leaves the kidneys through long, narrow tubes called **ureters**. The urine drains into the **bladder**, where it's stored. When you're ready to urinate, urine travels out the body through the **urethra**.

### When Kidney Stones Form

Chemicals in the urine can form crystals. These are like little bits of sand. If these crystals stick together, they become a hard mass called a **stone**. The stone can get stuck in a kidney or ureter. This blocks urine from getting to the bladder, causing severe pain.

### Prevent Future Stones

These steps can help prevent future kidney stones:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Make any changes in your diet that your healthcare provider recommends.
- Take medication as prescribed.
- Seek your healthcare provider for regular checkups.

### To Help Pass a Kidney Stone

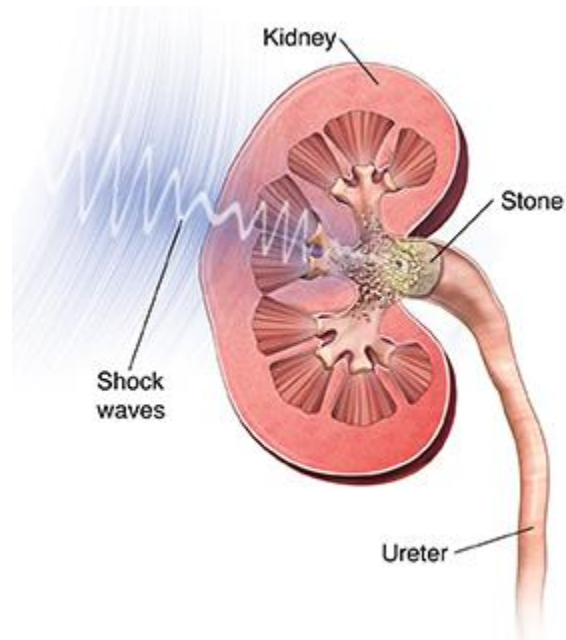
Passing a kidney stone through the urinary tract can be very painful. **Shock wave lithotripsy (SWL)** is a treatment to help. It breaks the kidney stone into smaller pieces that are easier to pass.

### How does SWL Work?

SWL crushes a kidney stone while it is still inside your body. No incisions are needed. Instead, sound waves are sent into your body from outside your skin. These cause the stone to crumble into tiny, sandlike, pieces. The pieces can then pass through the urinary tract more easily.

### Your Experience

At least a week before the procedure, tell your healthcare provider what medications you're taking, including blood thinners or daily aspirin. SWL is done in a hospital, lithotripsy center, or mobile lithotripsy van. The procedure itself takes about an hour. You will likely go home the same day.



### During the Procedure

- You'll receive medication to prevent pain and help you relax or sleep. Once this takes effect, the procedure begins.
- A stent (flexible tube) may be placed into your ureter. This helps keep urine flowing from the kidney.
- X-rays or ultrasound images are used to pinpoint the exact location of the kidney stone.
- Sound waves are sent into the stone at high speed. If you're awake, you may feel tapping as these pass through your body.
- When the procedure is done, you'll be watched in a recovery area for about 1 to 3 hours. Before you go home, you may be prescribed antibiotics, pain medication, or both to take at home.

### Passing the Stone

It can take a day to several weeks for the pieces of stone to pass. During this time:

- Drink plenty of fluids to help flush your system.
- Your urine may be cloudy or slightly bloody. You may even see small pieces of stone.
- You may have some bruising on your back or abdomen.

- You may have a slight fever and some pain. Take prescribed pain medication as directed by your health care provider.
- You may be asked to strain your urine to collect stone particles. These will be studied in a lab.

## Following up

You'll have a follow-up visit in a few weeks. If you were given a stent, it will be removed at this time. Imaging tests may be done to check for pieces of stone. If large pieces remain, you may need a second SWL or another procedure.

## Risks and Possible Complications Include:

- Infection
- Bleeding in the kidney
- Bruising of the kidney or skin
- Blockage of the ureter
- Failure to break up the stone (other procedures may be needed)

## Call the Healthcare Provider if you have:

- Fever of 100.4 F (38 degrees C) or higher
- Heavy bleeding or blood clots during urination
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- Pain that doesn't go away with medication
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Problems Urinating