

Inflatable Penile Prosthesis (IPP)

WARWIKI

Patient Information · What to expect before your penile implant surgery

An inflatable penile prosthesis (IPP) is a device, placed completely under your skin, that lets you get a firm erection whenever you choose — for men whose erectile dysfunction has not improved with pills, injections, or other treatments. You control it with a pump hidden in the scrotum. This handout explains how it works, how to prepare, and what to expect.

About This Procedure

When **erectile dysfunction (ED)** does not improve with pills, a vacuum device, or injections, an implant is the most reliable next step, with very high satisfaction. A three-part device is placed, all hidden under your skin:

- Two soft **cylinders** inside the penis that fill with fluid to make it firm
- A **pump** in the scrotum that you squeeze to inflate and press to deflate
- A fluid **reservoir** in the lower belly

How you use it: squeeze the pump several times to fill the cylinders for an erection; press the release valve to go soft again. You decide when, and for how long.

What to Know

This is a **permanent choice**. Placing the implant changes the erectile tissue, so afterward natural erections and other ED treatments (pills, injections) no longer work — the implant becomes how you get an erection. Importantly, it does **not change your urination, your sensation, your orgasm, or your ejaculation**. Like any implant, it carries some risk — mainly infection, and the device can wear out over many years and need replacement.

LEARN THE TERMS

Erectile dysfunction (ED)

Trouble getting or keeping an erection firm enough for sex.

Penile prosthesis (IPP)

The implanted device that produces an erection when you choose.

Cylinders

The two parts placed inside the penis that fill with fluid to make it firm.

Pump

The part in the scrotum you squeeze to inflate and press to deflate.

Reservoir

The fluid container placed in the lower belly.

Activation

The visit ~4–6 weeks after surgery where the device is first used and you are taught to work it.

Cycling

Inflating and deflating daily after healing — keeps it working well and helps keep length.

General anesthesia

Medicine that keeps you asleep and pain-free during surgery.

WILL IT HURT? The surgery is done under general or spinal anesthesia, so you feel nothing during it. Afterward, expect soreness, swelling, and bruising of the penis and scrotum for a couple of weeks — a scrotal support, ice, and pain medicine help. The surgery takes about an hour, and many people go home the same day. Do not use the device until your surgeon activates it.

How to Get Ready (Before Surgery)

- Done under **general or spinal anesthesia** — follow all surgery instructions (fasting, and which medicines to hold, including blood thinners).
- **Infection prevention is critical:** any infection (including a urine infection) is treated first, and you'll shower with antiseptic soap and get antibiotics.
- **Do not smoke or vape**, and if you have **diabetes** your team will want your blood sugar well controlled — both lower the infection risk.

Tell your team ahead of time if you:

- Have **diabetes**, or trouble using your hands (you operate the pump yourself)
- Have had prior pelvic or penile surgery, radiation, or a previous implant

What Happens During Surgery

- 1 You are asleep or numb from the waist down under anesthesia, and antibiotics are given.
- 2 Through one small incision (near the scrotum or the lower belly), the surgeon places the **cylinders** in the penis, the **pump** in the scrotum, and the **reservoir** in the lower belly — all under the skin.
- 3 The device is tested, then left deflated to heal. A catheter may be placed briefly.

After Surgery

- Expect penile and scrotal **swelling and bruising** for 1–2 weeks. Wear a scrotal support, use ice, take pain medicine, and keep the incision clean and dry.
- **Do not use the device or have sex until your surgeon clears you** — usually about **4–6 weeks**. At that **activation visit**, the device is inflated for the first time and you are taught to work the pump (deflating takes the most practice).
- After that, **inflate and deflate it daily ("cycling")** for the first months — this keeps it working smoothly and helps maintain length.

Call your care team or seek care if you have:

- A fever or chills, or growing redness, pain, swelling, or drainage at the incision
- You cannot urinate
- Severe or worsening pain, or the penis looks dusky or dark

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. An IPP is a hidden device for ED that hasn't responded to other treatments — squeeze the scrotal pump for an erection, press the release valve to go soft.
2. It is a **permanent choice** (natural erections and pills/injections won't work afterward), but it does **not change urination, sensation, orgasm, or ejaculation**.
3. Preventing infection matters most — treat any infection first, don't smoke, and use the antiseptic wash and antibiotics. Don't use the device until it's activated (~4–6 weeks), then cycle daily.