

Napa Valley Urology

Penile Rehabilitation Following Robotic Radical Prostatectomy

It is not unusual to have difficulty getting erections after this procedure. If you had both of your erectile nerves spared during the procedure, however, chances are good that you can get them back within a year. Even if only one nerve was spared, there is still a chance of getting them back. Chances are better for men who are generally healthier and younger. A 50 year old who had both nerves spared has about a 75 to 80 percent chance of getting his erections back within a year, whereas a 75 year old has about a 50-60 percent chance. If only one nerve was spared, then these percentages go down by about half.

There is some data out there that suggests that men who undergo an active penile rehabilitation program will increase their chance of getting erections on their own by as much as 50 percent. What is penile rehabilitation? It is not quite like rehabilitating a knee after a knee replacement, but the idea is similar. Penile rehabilitation involves getting the penis active so that it can function normally again. This is not done by exercises, but rather by increasing blood flow to the penis through pharmacology.

What most researchers are now recommending to do this is for patients to take 25 mg of Viagra 3 or 4 days a week. In addition, they recommend taking a 50 or 100 mg Viagra 3 times a week in an attempt to get an erection. If one is unable to get an erection with 100 mg of Viagra, then one should still try anyway. The idea behind this is that Viagra increases blood flow to the penis, thereby increasing oxygenation to the erectile tissue. Increased oxygen tension in tissue is known to improve recovery and cell function.

If one is unable to get erections with 100 mg Viagra, then they should move on by attempting to get erections with a urethral suppository (MUSE), or a penile injection. These are both very easy to administer with minimal, if any, pain. Your doctor can demonstrate how to do these in the office and get you started on it. The dose may need to be adjusted upwards for you to get an erection, but in most cases it is achievable. The goal would be to get three full erections a week. This will be done in place of the 50 or 100 mgs of Viagra.

This can obviously put a dent in your pocketbook as insurance often does not cover more than a few doses of Viagra or the suppositories or injections. If the cost is too much, then the recommendation would be to take the medication as often as you can.

If, after a year, there is still not enough recovery to allow for successful intercourse, then there is a procedure that can be done to restore your erections. This procedure involves placing an inflatable penile prosthesis. This sounds horrible, but it really is not! The device is completely hidden, can be inserted on an outpatient basis, and patient satisfaction with the device is 97 percent!! That is the highest patient satisfaction rate for any type of therapy for erectile dysfunction. There is more information about this on my website www.drjhendricks.com.