

Prompt treatment of kidney stones keeps costs down

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Complications more likely to arise with surgical delay.

(HealthDay)—Delaying surgery for kidney stones can increase the risk of complications, raising health care costs, a new study finds.

"These data underscore the importance of prompt attention and treatment of patients presenting with [kidney stones](#)," Dr. Howard Adler, associate professor of urology at Stony Brook University in New York, said in a news release from the American Urological Association.

Surgery to remove these small, hard mineral deposits that form inside the kidney has become more common in the United States as prevalence of kidney stones has increased, Adler said. More than one million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with kidney stones this year.

In this study, researchers from the University of Texas Southwestern looked at 795 people who had [surgery](#) for kidney stones over two years. A longer time between diagnosis and surgery was associated with a higher rate of complications, and greater use of medical imaging tests and antibiotics.

The median time—meaning half delayed longer, half less—from diagnosis to surgery was 79 days, the study authors found. Patients who had surgery more than 45 days after diagnosis were about 15 times more likely to have an unplanned clinic visit,

almost six times more likely to have additional medical imaging tests, and about five times more likely to require antibiotics, compared with those who had surgery sooner.

Between [diagnosis](#) and surgery, more than half of patients had unplanned emergency department or clinic visits, including 11 percent who required hospitalization, the findings showed.

Adler was scheduled to moderate a press conference on the findings Saturday at the annual meeting of the American Urological Association, in New Orleans. Data and conclusions presented at meetings are usually considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

"Delay in treatment not only complicates cases, but impacts the quality of patient care and boosts [health care costs](#)," Adler said in the news release.

More information: The National Kidney Foundation has more about [kidney stones](#).

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