Stents – The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

**The Good:** Stents are good because they help your kidney drain better. If your kidney does not drain for a prolonged period of time it can stop working.

**The Bad:** Most stents are uncomfortable at first. Although your body can get used to this foreign object, the bladder spasms to try and get them out. Bladder pain, urinary frequency, and burning, similar symptoms to an infection are all normal with stents. You can certainly always get checked for infection to make sure there aren’t two things going on, but 95% of the time or more, urinary frequency and burning are just normal reactions to a stent. A small amount of blood in the urine (that can turn the urine orange or light red) is also normal. The stent irritates the bladder just enough to allow the release of a few red blood cells.

**The Ugly:** A stent is a plastic tube with a curl at the top and at the bottom. The curls keep the stent from moving up from the bladder or down from the kidney. Stents are about 12 inches long. Occasionally your doctor will leave a string coming out of your urethra that is attached to the stent. Pulling the string can remove the stent. More often, however, your doctor will need to slide a scope into the bladder to grasp the stent for removal. This short procedure can be done with local anesthesia in the clinic.

**The Important:** If a stent is not removed within 6 months it can actually become calcified and block the kidney from draining. This can make removal difficult as well. If the cause of your obstructed ureter is not just temporary, you will need a new stent to replace the old one about every 6 months. If you do not replace or remove your stent, it will calcify and become nearly impossible to remove and will block the kidney, decreasing function. If you need your sent removed or replaced please call Jolene to schedule an appointment at 720-848-1388.