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Patient Care & Health Information Tests & Procedures

Nephrectomy (kidney removal)

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Overview

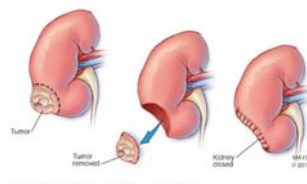
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Nephrectomy (nuh-FREK-tuh-me) is a surgical procedure to remove all or part of a kidney:

- **Radical (complete) nephrectomy.**

During a radical nephrectomy, the urologic surgeon removes the entire kidney and often some additional structures, such as part of the tube that connects the kidney to the bladder (ureter), or other adjacent structures such as the adrenal gland or lymph nodes.

- **Partial nephrectomy.** In a partial nephrectomy, also called kidney-sparing (nephron-sparing) surgery, the surgeon removes diseased tissue from a kidney and leaves healthy tissue in place.



Partial nephrectomy

Most often a nephrectomy is performed to treat kidney cancer or to remove a noncancerous (benign) tumor. In some cases, a nephrectomy is performed to deal with a diseased or seriously damaged kidney. In the case of a donor nephrectomy, the urologic surgeon removes a healthy kidney from a donor for transplant into a person who needs a functioning kidney.

The urologic surgeon may perform a nephrectomy through a single incision in the abdomen or side (open nephrectomy) or through a series of small incisions in the abdomen using a camera and small instruments

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