Enlarged Prostate/Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (Bph)

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland, which is common in older men. The prostate gland surrounds the urethra, the tube through which urine exits the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it can compress the urethra, leading to urinary difficulties.

Potential Symptoms

The symptoms of BPH can vary but often include:

- Frequent urination: Especially at night (nocturia).
- Urgency: A sudden, strong need to urinate.
- Difficulty starting urination: Hesitancy or straining.
- Weak urine stream: Reduced flow or dribbling.
- Incomplete emptying: Feeling that the bladder is not completely emptied.
- Intermittent stream: Starting and stopping during urination.

Treatment Options

Treatment for BPH depends on the severity of symptoms and may include:

- Lifestyle changes: Reducing fluid intake before bedtime, limiting caffeine and alcohol, and practising bladder training.
- Medication:
    - Alpha blockers: Relax the muscles of the bladder neck and prostate (e.g., tamsulosin).
    - 5-alpha reductase inhibitors: Shrink the prostate by inhibiting hormonal changes (e.g., finasteride).
- Minimally invasive procedures: For those who do not respond to medications or have moderate to severe symptoms.
    - Rezum: Uses steam to destroy excess prostate tissue.
    - GreenLight Laser: Uses a laser to vaporise prostate tissue and widen the urethra.
- Surgery: In severe cases, procedures like transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) may be performed.

Rezūm Therapy

- Preparation: Local or general anaesthesia is administered.
- Procedure: A small device is inserted into the urethra to the site of the prostate. Controlled steam is injected into the prostate tissue.
- Duration: Takes about 10-20 minutes.
- Post-procedure: A catheter may be placed for a few days to assist in urination.

Greenlight Laser

- Preparation: General or spinal anaesthesia is used.
- Procedure: A fibre-optic cable carrying the laser is inserted into the urethra. The laser vaporises the enlarged prostate tissue.
- Duration: Typically takes 60-90 minutes.
- Post-procedure: A catheter may be placed temporarily.

Risks Involved

Common risks associated with BPH treatments include:

- Infection: Urinary tract infections are possible post-procedure.
- Bleeding: Especially with surgical interventions.
- Retrograde ejaculation: Semen enters the bladder instead of exiting through the penis.
- Urinary incontinence: Loss of bladder control, though usually temporary.
- Urethral stricture: Narrowing of the urethra from scar tissue.
- Erectile dysfunction: Rare but possible.

Recovery Process

- Catheter Care: If a catheter is used, instructions on care will be provided.
- Hydration: Drink plenty of water to flush the urinary system.
- Activity: Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activities for a few weeks.
- Follow-up: Regular check-ups with the healthcare provider to monitor recovery.
- Medication: Pain relief and antibiotics may be prescribed.

Specific To Rezūm

- Symptoms: Some discomfort or urinary symptoms may persist for a few weeks.
- Improvement: Symptom improvement typically starts within a few weeks and continues for several months.

Specific To Greenlight Laser

- Initial recovery: Most men can return to normal activities within a week.
- Urinary symptoms: May experience burning, urgency, and frequency initially, but these usually resolve within a few weeks.

In summary, BPH is a common condition in ageing men, and while it can significantly impact quality of life, there are various effective treatments available. The choice of treatment should be tailored to the individual, considering the severity of symptoms, overall health, and personal preferences.