



Dr Jonathan Broome | Consultant Gynaecologist

Patient Information Leaflet

TENSION FREE FASCIA SUPPORT (TFFS) PROCEDURE

What is a TFFS?

A Tension Free Fascial Support (TFFS) is a surgical treatment for stress urinary incontinence (SUI) in women. Stress urinary incontinence is the leakage of urine when pressure is placed on the bladder, such as when coughing, sneezing, laughing, exercising, or lifting.

The TFFS procedure involves placing a small strip of fascia under the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder) to provide support and reduce urine leakage.

Why Am I Being Offered a TFFS?

You may be offered a TFFS if:

- You have stress urinary incontinence that affects your quality of life.
- Pelvic floor exercises and other non-surgical treatments have not been successful.
- You wish to consider a surgical option after discussing alternatives with your healthcare professional.

What Are the Alternatives?

Alternative treatments include:

- Pelvic floor muscle training (physiotherapy)
- Lifestyle changes such as weight loss and reducing caffeine intake
- Continence devices
- Urethral bulking injections
- Other surgical procedures, including colposuspension or autologous fascial sling surgery

Dr Broome will discuss which option may be most suitable for you.

How is the Operation Performed?

The operation is usually carried out under either:

- General anaesthetic (you are asleep), or
- Regional anaesthetic (you are awake but numb from the waist down)

During the procedure:

- A small cut is made in the vaginal wall beneath the urethra.
- A narrow fascial strip is placed under the urethra.
- The fascial strip is positioned without tension and acts as a supportive band.
- The cuts are closed with dissolvable stitches.

The operation usually takes around 20-30 minutes.

What Are the Benefits?

The main benefits are:

- Reduced urine leakage during physical activity, coughing, sneezing, or exercise.
- Improved confidence and quality of life.
- A relatively short operation and recovery period.
- No mesh is used.

Many women experience significant improvement or complete resolution of their symptoms.

What Are the Risks and Complications?

All surgical procedures carry some risks.

Common risks:

- Temporary discomfort or pain
- Bruising
- Bleeding
- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Difficulty passing urine immediately after surgery

Less common risks:

- Bladder injury during surgery
- Persistent or recurrent urinary leakage
- New urgency symptoms (sudden need to pass urine)
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Pelvic pain
- Difficulty emptying the bladder, which may require intermittent self-catheterisation for a period of time

Rare risks:

- Injury to surrounding organs or blood vessels
- Need for further surgery to adjust, remove, or revise the fascial support
- Long-term voiding difficulties

Dr Broome will discuss these risks with you and answer any questions before you decide whether to proceed.

What Happens Before the Operation?

You may be asked to:

- Attend a pre-operative assessment clinic.
- Have blood tests or other investigations.
- Stop smoking if possible.
- Follow instructions about eating and drinking before surgery.
- Inform your healthcare team about any medications you take, particularly blood-thinning medicines.

What Happens After the Operation?

After surgery:

- You will be monitored in the recovery area.
- A catheter may be placed temporarily to drain urine.
- You may need a bladder scan to check that you are emptying your bladder properly.
- Most patients go home the same day or the following day.

You may experience mild vaginal bleeding or discomfort for a few days.

Recovery at Home

For the first few weeks:

- Rest and gradually increase your activities.
- Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise for approximately 4-6 weeks.
- Avoid sexual intercourse for around 4-6 weeks or as advised by your surgeon.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take pain relief as prescribed.

Most women can return to office-based work within 1-2 weeks, although this varies depending on the type of work performed.

When Should I Seek Medical Advice?

Contact the Pelvic Clinic team or seek urgent medical attention if you experience:

- Heavy vaginal bleeding
- Fever or signs of infection
- Severe pain not relieved by medication
- Difficulty passing urine
- Burning or pain when passing urine
- Increasing swelling, redness, or discharge
- New or worsening urinary symptoms

Follow-Up & Contact

Follow-Up

You will be offered a follow-up appointment at 6 weeks to assess your recovery and discuss any ongoing symptoms or concerns.

Questions?

If you have any questions about your treatment, please contact the Pelvic Clinic. They will be happy to discuss any concerns and help you make an informed decision about your care.

Email: info@thepelvicclinic.co.uk

Telephone: 0161 726 5100