# U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to Undergo Medical Procedure at Walter Reed Medical Center



U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will undergo a medical procedure at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Friday evening and will temporarily transfer his duties to Deputy Secretary Kathleen Hicks. The procedure, which is minimally invasive and unrelated to his previous cancer diagnosis, addresses ongoing bladder issues that emerged following his prostate cancer treatment last year.

Austin has faced health complications since undergoing a prostatectomy in December, which led to two subsequent hospitalizations. He drew criticism for not promptly informing the President or Congress about his initial diagnosis and hospitalizations. In a statement in February, he admitted this oversight and committed to greater transparency regarding his health.

The Pentagon, led by spokesperson Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, has notified the White House and Congress of the current plan. Austin, who has expressed confidence in his excellent cancer prognosis, will transfer authority to Hicks during his brief incapacitation.

Separately, Austin is scheduled to attend the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore next week, where he is expected to meet with China's Defense Minister Admiral Dong Jun. This meeting marks a step toward thawing U.S.-China relations, which have been strained since a 2022 visit to Taiwan by Nancy Pelosi.