

Mitchell Faces Surgery On Artery in Abdomen

Washington

Former Attorney General John Mitchell will undergo surgery for a ballooned abdominal blood vessel, his doctor said yesterday.

Dr. P. M. Palumbo, who has been treating Mitchell for an arthritic hip while the convicted Watergate conspirator was on medical furlough from a federal prison, said his patient will enter Georgetown University Hospital in Washington tomorrow.

The original furlough was scheduled to expire that day, but the Justice Department announced yesterday it had been extended until January 27 to allow for surgery in a civilian hospital.

Federal prison officials have said they could not guarantee the former attorney general's safety in a prison hospital.

In advance of the department's

announcement, Palumbo said in an interview the serious arterial ailment known as an aortic aneurysm — first suspected last week but not confirmed until Wednesday — would require an extension of the furlough.

Mitchell, serving the first year of a reduced one-to-four-year term for the Watergate coverup conspiracy, had been furloughed for examination of his hip. He is eligible for parole in June.

Palumbo, an orthopedic surgeon called in to decide whether Mitchell requires insertion of an artificial hip bone, said he referred the aneurism case to Dr. Charles Hufnagel, a cardiovascular surgeon.

Palumbo said he has determined that Mitchell also needs hip surgery, but that must be postponed in view of the aneurysm.

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