Prostate Brachytherapy

In this guide, you will find information about:

What is brachytherapy?
- Important dates for your treatment.
- How to prepare for your implant.
- Possible side effects.
- When to call for help.

Your Brachytherapy Team:

Radiation Oncologist: ___________________________________________________________________________________________________
London Regional Cancer Program: 519.685.8600
OR Nurse: Tammie Murray  519.685.8600 ext. 51355
OR Nurse: Leanne Derrah
Radiation Therapist: _____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Please have your chart number ready when you call:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What is Prostate Brachytherapy?

Prostate brachytherapy (bra-kee-ther-uh-pee) is a radiation treatment using special applicators that are placed in or near the tumour. A radioactive source is put into the applicator for a period of time and then removed. This procedure is done at the London Regional Cancer Program’s (LRCP) Brachytherapy Suite.
The process for Prostate Brachytherapy needs several visits. The Brachytherapy Nurses will book all of these visits and will contact you when the dates are known.

**Important Dates**

**Pre-admit Appointment**

Date: ____________________________  Time: ____________________________

Location: C2-600, Pre-admit Clinic
Victoria Hospital, 800 Commissioners Rd. E.

- Bring all of the medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements you are taking to this visit.

If you need help finding the room, call 519-685-8500 or visit the London Health Sciences Centre website at www.lhsc.on.ca.

**Implant Day**

- You will need to prepare for this visit. Please follow the special instructions listed in this pamphlet.

Date: ____________________________  Time: ____________________________

Location: B2-100 Patient Registration
Victoria Hospital, 800 Commissioners Rd. E.

**External Radiation Planning**

- This appointment will be made for you on your Implant Procedure Day.

**Pre-admit Appointment**

The purpose of the pre-admit appointment is to do a number of tests.
Preparing for the Implant Procedure

Two weeks before the Implant date:

☐ If you are taking blood thinners, talk about stopping this medication before your implant with the doctor who prescribed it.

☐ Fill your prescriptions.
   Be sure to follow the directions on the label.

☐ You will need to buy:
   ✓ One bottle of Citromag® (strong laxative);
   ✓ Two gel cold packs.

Day before the Implant: ________________________________

Eat as you normally do until 3:00 p.m.

1. At 3:00 p.m. - follow these steps to prepare your bowel for the procedure:
   • Drink three (3) 8 ounce glasses of clear fluid/water.
   • Drink one full bottle of Citromag®.
   • Drink three (3) 8 ounce glasses of clear fluid/water after the Citromag®.

2. From 3:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (midnight) do not eat any solid food. You may have clear fluids only:

   Allowed:
   ✓ water, clear juices (no pulp), pop;
   ✓ black or green tea, black coffee;
   ✓ sport drinks (e.g., Gatorade®);
   ✓ clear broths and consommé;
   ✓ clear fruit gelatin dessert (e.g., Jello®) and popsicles;
   ✓ honey or sugar may be added to clear fluids;
   ✓ sucking on hard candies (e.g., mints) is allowed.
Not allowed:
× all solid food;
× milk;
× milk products (e.g., yogurt, cheese, etc.).

3. After midnight (12:00 a.m.) – do not eat or drink anything until after the Implant Procedure.

**Implant Procedure**

The purpose of this visit is to treat the prostate cancer with radiation. It is very important to prepare for the procedure. Please follow all the steps listed in “Preparing for the Implant Procedure”.

Leave all your valuables (e.g., watch, rings, etc.) at home and bring all of your medicines including vitamins and herbal supplements you are taking.

**Day of Procedure**

- You will check in at Patient Registration.
- You will be brought to the Day Surgery Unit to prepare for the procedure. An IV will be started and an antibiotic will be given to you.
- This procedure is done under general anesthetic in the LRCP Brachytherapy Suite. This means you will be asleep for the implant.
- When you are asleep, applicators will be put into place. A catheter will be inserted into your bladder to drain urine away.
- Tubes will be attached to the applicators and the treatment will begin. This only takes a few minutes. After the treatment is finished, the applicators are removed.
- When you wake up, the catheter will still be in place.
- You may have some pain when you wake up. If so, you will be given medicine to help manage the pain.
- Once you have recovered, you will be taken back to Day Surgery.
- The catheter will be removed before you go home.
- You will go home the same day.

Please arrange to have someone take you home.
Instructions after the treatment

- Take your medicine as directed.
- Applying an ice pack to the area for the first 24 hours following the procedure can help reduce pain and swelling. Apply ice for 10 to 15 minutes. Wait 10 to 15 minutes and apply ice again, as needed.
- Avoid exercise, exertion or heavy lifting for one week. Do not lift objects that weigh more than 20 pounds (9 kilograms).
- You may shower or gently wash the treatment area and pat dry for the first week after the treatment.
- You may resume sexual activity as soon as you are comfortable.
- Take your temperature. If it rises above 38°C (100.4°F), follow the instructions in “When do I need to call for help?”

What are the possible side effects?

In the first 48-hours, you may get the following side effects:

- Bruising, swelling, tenderness in the scrotum and implant area;
- Blood in the urine;
- Slight bleeding from the implant area.

After your treatment and during your External Radiation Therapy you may get the following:

- Discomfort and pain when urinating;
- More urgency to urinate;
- Increased need to urinate, with a weaker stream;
- Persistent erectile dysfunction.

Symptoms often improve if you:

- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of water per day;
- Avoid alcohol;
- Avoid drinks with caffeine (e.g., tea, coffee, cola, etc.);
- Make sure you report symptoms and side effects that bother you to your nurse.
External Radiation Therapy

Your next appointment will be given to you on your implant day.

When do I call for help?

Go to your nearest Emergency Department if:

- You cannot urinate for more than 4 to 6 hours, or your lower abdomen feels full;
- The blood in the urine increases;
- You see blood clots in the urine;
- Your temperature is above 38°C (100.4°F) or higher;
- Your pain cannot be controlled with medicine.

If you receive care outside of LRCP, please let your nurse or doctor know.

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