Prostate Brachytherapy - Seed Implant

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 that uses tiny radioactive seeds. The seeds contain radioactive iodine that is sealed within a thin metal case. The iodine gives off low energy radiation that only affects the area where it is placed. Usually, about 80 to 120 seeds are placed in the prostate. The implant is permanent, which means the seeds cannot be taken out.
The Radiation Oncologist will implant the seeds using guidance from a probe placed in your rectum (transrectal ultrasound) while you are under general anesthesia.

This treatment requires 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.
- The purpose of this appointment is to do a number of tests.

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

**Seed 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.

**CT Scan and MRI**

- You will receive these dates on your seed implant day.

CT Scan:  Date:_________________________  Time: __________________

MRI:  Date:_________________________  Time: __________________

Follow-up:  Date:_________________________  Time: __________________
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.

Seed Implant Procedure

During this procedure, the small seeds that release radiation to your prostate will be put into your prostate. It is important that you follow the steps listed in “Preparing for the Implant Procedure.

Leave all of your valuables (e.g., watches, rings, etc.) at home and bring your medicines, including any vitamins and herbs, to this visit.

Here is what you can expect on the day of your seed implant procedure:

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 a general anesthetic in the LRCP Brachytherapy Suite. This means you will be asleep for the implant.
• When you are asleep, the implant will be put into place. A catheter will be inserted into your bladder to drain urine away.
• When you wake up, the catheter will still be in place.
• 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.
- Apply an ice pack to the area while you are awake for the first day (24-hours) following your procedure. Do 10 to 15 minutes on the area followed by 10 to 15 minutes off. This can help reduce swelling and pain.
- Strain your urine for one week with the strainer given to you in Day Surgery. If a seed passes and gets caught in the strainer, use a tweezer to pick it up. Place the seed in a disposable container. Do not mail the container to LRCP. Return it to the clinic on your next visit.
- Avoid exercise 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 implant.
- You may resume sexual activity as soon as you are comfortable. There is a small chance that a seed may be passed in the ejaculate, so for the first two ejaculates you should wear a condom.
- Take your temperature. If it rises above 38°C (100.5°F), follow the instructions in “When do I need to call for help?”
- Pushing or straining to have a bowel movement may increase the swelling in the prostate. If you become constipated take a stool softener or laxative.

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.);
- Reporting symptoms and side effects that bother you to your Primary Nurse.

What do I need to know about radiation safety?

- Keep at least six feet (2 metres) away from babies, children that are not full grown, and pregnant women. You will need to do this for the next two months.

Can I Travel?

- Travelling will not affect the implants. However, the implants may trigger sensitive equipment that measures radiation. This equipment is installed at international border crossings. When you go to another country (e.g., USA), you will need to show a card that shows the type of radiation that is in your implant. This card will be given to you after your implant procedure. You will need to keep it for at least one year.

Carry the brachytherapy card in your wallet for the next 12 months. If you are trying to board a plane or cross the border the card will inform authorities that you have radioactive seeds in your prostate. If they have any questions there is a number they can call for information.
Follow-up Appointment

Check in at Main Reception, LRCP on Level 2 at least 60 minutes before your visit with your healthcare team. The reason is that your oncologist may want to have a chest x-ray and some blood work done for your visit.

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.