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FACTSHEET

Brachytherapy (Radioactive Seed Insertion) of the Prostate

About the Procedure:

Used primarily in the treatment of prostate cancer, brachytherapy is a procedure during which, under general anesthesia, small needles are passed through the skin behind the scrotum (the *perineum*) and into the prostate. Tiny, radiation-emitting seeds are delivered into the prostate tissue itself with the help of a Radiation Oncologist. The prostate (and the cancer within) is then treated with a safe dose of radiation released from the seeds over time, destroying the prostate cancer. The procedure usually takes between 2 and 3 hours. You will likely be released from the hospital on the same day as the procedure with a catheter in your bladder to be removed by your doctor in 7 to 10 days.

Preparing for the Procedure:

Take only clear liquids on the day prior to the procedure. Acceptable liquids include tea or coffee (no milk or cream), water, apple juice, Gatorade or other sports drinks, popsicles, Italian ice, or chicken broth.

Drink five ounces of citrate of magnesium at 4:00 pm the day before the procedure. If this does not produce a bowel movement by 7:00 pm take an additional 2 ounces of citrate of magnesium. This is available over the counter in the laxative section of your pharmacy. Remember to drink plenty of clear liquids to stay hydrated while preparing for your procedure.

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before the procedure. You should take your usual medications as you normally would the morning of your procedure with a small sip of water only (avoid juice, milk, coffee, etc.).

Starting 5 to 10 days prior to your procedure (ask your doctor for a specific time), it is important to stop taking medications that might increase your risk of bleeding. For a list of blood-thinning medications that should be avoided, [click here](#) or ask you doctor.

Additionally, your doctor may have prescribed for you an enema, which should be taken rectally 2 hours before coming in to the hospital on the day of your surgery. Check the packaging of the enema for specific instructions.

After the Procedure:

In addition to being sent home with a catheter in you bladder, there will be a dressing over the procedure site in your groin (perineum). This can usually be removed the day after you arrive home (the second day after surgery). After that, it is OK to shower, but baths and soaking in tubs should be avoided for 2 weeks following the procedure. Avoid heavy lifting, exercise, and strenuous activity for 4 to 6 weeks following your procedure.

You will be discharged with a catheter in your bladder. This is typically left in place for 1 to 2 weeks. The catheter should only be removed by your Urologist. Drink 6 to 8 glasses (1500cc) of fluid daily until the catheter is removed. If blood appears in your urine (red fluid in the tubing of the catheter), increase your fluid intake and decrease your activity level until it clears.

While at home, keep the catheter connected to the large drainage bag. It is OK to use the smaller drainage bag if you plan on going out of the house. It is normal for your catheter to have pink to reddish urine, especially with increased activity or bowel movements.

Decreasing your activity and increasing fluids will usually make the urine clear. You may notice pink discharge at the tip of the penis—this is normal. Applying over-the-counter antibacterial ointment (e.g. Neosporin or Bacitracin) 2 to 4 times daily to the tip of the penis will help decrease irritation.