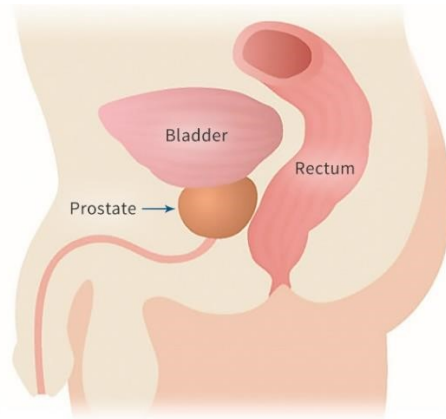


# Brachytherapy Treatment Information – Prostate Cancer

This information will help prepare you and your caregiver for your treatment.

## What to Expect

Prostate seed implantation is a specialized form of radiation therapy that treats prostate cancer by placing radioactive seeds either permanently or temporarily directly into the prostate **while you are under anesthesia**. Both forms of brachytherapy are administered via needles placed through the perineum, the space between the scrotum and the anus, into the prostate gland with ultrasound guidance. The permanent seeds are very small and release radiation slowly over several months (low-dose rate, or LDR). Within 1 year (often much less, depending on the type of seed used), the radioactivity is considered gone; however, the metallic seeds will remain in your prostate gland. The temporary seed treatment is delivered with a single high-activity source that travels through the needles into your prostate and is then removed, leaving no radiation sources behind. This radiation is delivered in large doses over a short period of time (high-dose rate, or HDR).



## Before the Procedure

Preoperative testing will standardly be performed by the outpatient operating room services typically on the morning of the procedure. However, if you have heart, lung, or

other major medical issues, we will recommend clearance and such testing ahead of time.

About a week prior to the procedure, a prescription will be sent to your pharmacy for a bowel preparation drink similar to that used for a colonoscopy, called GoLYTELY. You will basically follow the directions on the package, with the exception that you only need to drink 2 liters of the solution rather than the 4 liters normally recommended for a colonoscopy.

- The day prior to the procedure, we would recommend eating light meals only.
- Around 2-3 p.m., you should start the bowel preparation; from this point until midnight, only clear liquids should be consumed.
- **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight** the night before your procedure, including hard candy and gum. Between midnight and up until 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, you may have a few sips of water to take any medications approved by your physician.

If you are taking aspirin, you will want to hold off taking it for 5 days prior to, and including, the day of the procedure. We will let you know when you can start. If you are taking aspirin or any other blood thinner for a clotting disorder or cardiac condition, we will need to discuss further with your cardiologist and/or hematologist to find out what is safe.

You must make arrangements for someone, at least 18 years of age, to drive you to and from your procedure. They must be available during the entire procedure and bring you home afterwards. The operating room will not check you in for the procedure unless this person is present and available.

## Immediately after the Procedure

You will wake up in the recovery area and we will start a medication to help with urination if you are not already on it. You will still have a urinary catheter in place, which we will remove once we have allowed your bladder to fill for testing. In the meantime, we encourage you to eat, drink, and walk around once cleared by nursing to allow the anesthesia to clear from your body and speed your recovery. Some bleeding and spotting

in the perineum is normal, and a Band-Aid isn't needed. You should be discharged home a few hours after you wake up (same-day procedure).

## Side Effects

With brachytherapy, some swelling, soreness, and frequent urination just after the procedure may occur; however, these side effects are from the needles placed during the brachytherapy procedure rather than the radiation itself. Please discuss problems or concerns about side effects or any part of your treatment with your doctor or nurse.

**Urinary problems** are the most common symptoms.

- Some patients are not able to urinate after the procedure or may only be able to urinate a few drops. **This is an emergency and you should call your physician right away if you are unable to urinate.**
- You may experience a need to urinate more often than normal. This usually begins 2 – 4 weeks after your procedure.
- Burning during urination can occur for 2 – 4 weeks after your procedure.
- A small amount of blood in your urine or ejaculate is normal and may appear pink in color. This will usually disappear 3 – 7 days after your procedure. **Call your physician** if bleeding continues after 7 days or you pass blood clots in your urine. Drink lots of fluids if any blood is noticed in urine.
- If you undergo permanent seed implantation, it is possible for a seed to be discharged in your urine or ejaculate. These may be safely flushed down the toilet, but to protect your partner, a condom should be used for sexual activity for 7 – 10 days after the procedure.

## Bruising and Swelling

It is common to experience bruising and possible swelling around the scrotum and perineum. This should go away 1 – 2 weeks following your procedure. Call your physician if you still have bruising and swelling after 2 weeks. Cold packs and minimizing trauma to the perineum are helpful.

## Pain

You may experience mild pain and discomfort for 1 – 2 days following your procedure. You can take acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen, or naproxen to help with pain. Call your physician if these medications do not relieve your discomfort.

## Post-Procedure Care

- Eat and drink as usual following your procedure.
- Drinking plenty of water (8 glasses) and avoiding caffeine-based products can help alleviate or eliminate symptoms.
- Do not lift anything over 20 pounds for 24 hours after your procedure.
- Avoid trauma to the perineum for 1 week after the procedure (bicycle riding, horseback riding).
- Do not scrub your perineum while washing for 72 hours after the procedure; it is okay to shower, just allow soapy water to wash over the area.

## Symptom Management

### Bladder

- Certain foods and beverages are more likely to increase urinary frequency or discomfort on treatment. These include carbonated, acidic, caffeinated, and alcoholic beverages. If you develop symptoms of urinary urgency or irritation, avoiding these may help.
- Additionally, an over-the-counter medication, Azo, may help with urinary irritation, although it will change the color of your urine.
- If any blood is noted in the urine, increase your fluid intake.

### Caution

- Heating pads and/or very hot water can cause pain or skin irritation to the treatment area (perineum); we recommend cold pads instead.

- Hot tubs or saunas are not encouraged for at least 1 week after your procedure.
- **Do not** use products with alcohol, including alcohol pads, on your skin in the perineum, or any other creams or powders for at least 1 week after the procedure.

## Radiation Precautions

- If you underwent a permanent seed implant (LDR), there are radioactive sources in your body, and you may set off radiation detectors at airports and military bases; a card will be provided that you must show if requested by law enforcement. We will also instruct you on any radiation safety precautions you must follow to protect people around you.
- If you underwent a temporary implant (HDR), there are no radiation sources in your body, and no concern for exposure to others.

## Call immediately if you have any of the following symptoms:

- New or worsening urinary symptoms
- Difficulty urinating
- Blood clots in your urine
- Temperature of 100.5°F or above
- Chills

## Contact Us

During or after office hours, call the Radiation Oncology Clinic line, 214-645-8525. We will connect you with your team during office hours, or with on-call staff after office hours.