Radioactive Prostate Seed Implant

Internal radiation therapy (brachytherapy) is a type of radiation that is given inside the body. Radioactive seed implant is a kind of internal radiation that can be used to treat prostate cancer. This treatment uses tiny “seeds” that are made of titanium and contain a radioactive material. The seeds are about the size of a grain of rice and are placed directly into the prostate.

What to Expect

Two to four weeks before your prostate seed implant, you will have an ultrasound scan of your prostate in the Radiation Oncology Department. The ultrasound helps your doctor plan the details for your implant, including the radioactive strength and how many seeds will be placed during your procedure. Other tests that will be done before the procedure include bloodwork, a chest x-ray and an electrocardiogram (EKG) to check your heart rate and rhythm.

On the day of your procedure, you will go to the operating room to have the seed implant done. You will have either a spinal or general anesthesia. Once you are under anesthesia, a urinary catheter will be placed in your bladder and an ultrasound probe will be placed into your rectum.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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The doctor uses the ultrasound probe to see your prostate on a screen. Long thin needles will be used to put in the seeds. The needles go through your skin between the scrotum and the rectum. The doctor will use the ultrasound to carefully guide the needles in place. Depending on the size and shape of your prostate, up to 65 to 120 seeds are used. The procedure usually takes 1 to 1½ hours to finish.

**After the Seed Implant**

- After the seeds are in place, you will go to the recovery area. A nurse will watch you closely and check your vital signs often as you are waking up.

- Once you are awake and ready to leave the recovery area, you will go to the Radiation Oncology Department for a CT scan of your pelvis. At that time, the catheter in your bladder will be removed and the staff will give you instructions on safety precautions you will need to follow after radioactive seeds are placed.

- After your CT scan is done, you will go back to the Ambulatory Surgery Unit and receive your discharge instructions.

- You can leave the hospital the same day if there is no bleeding and if you have gone to the bathroom without problems. If you are not able to urinate, you will have a urinary catheter placed in your
bladder before you can leave. If you leave with a catheter, you will be scheduled to return to your urologist’s office for follow up care.

- You should rest for one to two days before going back to your normal activities. **No lifting over 5 to 10 pounds for 7 days.**

**Side Effects after the Seed Implant**

You may have one or more of these side effects:

- Pain or burning when you urinate
- Passing urine with a small amount of blood or blood clots. **If bleeding worsens or does not decrease over 2 to 3 days, call your doctor.**
- Bruising or swelling in the skin under your testicles
- Increased need to urinate
- Getting up often at night to urinate
- Not able to urinate, have a slow stream or hard to start urine flow

You can reduce urinary problems if you:

- Limit coffee and other caffeine drinks or foods.
- Do not eat spicy and peppery foods.
- Do not eat high acid foods such as orange, grapefruit, pineapple or tomato products.
- Do not drink or limit your use of alcohol.
- Soak in a warm tub. This helps relax the prostate so you can urinate.
- Do not take over-the-counter cold medicines without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist. These medicines can make it more difficult to urinate.

You may be given prescriptions for medicines when you leave the hospital, these may include.

- An **antibiotic** to take for a few days after the implant.
- An **alpha-blocker medicine** like Flomax which helps your bladder empty more easily.
• An **anti-inflammatory medicine** like Ibuprofen to help with discomfort and reduce swelling and inflammation of the prostate.

**Important Safety Precautions after the Implant**

The seeds give off a very small amount of radiation from your body. Follow these precautions to make sure those around you are protected from unnecessary radiation.

• **Any woman who is pregnant or thinks she might be pregnant should not have close contact with you for the first month.** She can say hello to you briefly, and then move to a distance of 3 or more feet away. She should not sit next to you and should not hug you. If she stays **3 feet away**, there is no limit to the amount of time she can be in the same room with you.

• **Do not** hold children under age 18 or place a child on your lap during the first month following your implant. Also, you should limit the time a child spends within **3 feet** of you, to less than one hour per day. This restriction should continue for one full month after your procedure.

• A condom should be worn during sexual relations for the first two weeks after the implant. You will likely have blood in the ejaculate for a few days and up to a few weeks after the implant.

• Minor bleeding from the rectum may happen with this treatment. If this happens, call your radiation oncologist. Do not have any procedures to look at your bladder or colon (colonoscopy) before talking with your radiation oncologist.

• It is rare that a seed would come out, but if this happens follow these steps:

  1. **Do not** pick up the seed with your fingers, use a plastic spoon.

  2. Put the seed in a small glass jar with a lid or a plastic container with a lid.

  3. Call the Ohio State University Radiation Safety phone number at (614) 561-7969 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) for directions on what to do with the seed.
Other Important Things to Know

- You must follow the safety precautions about the amount of time you spend with people and the distance you keep from them.

- Items that you touch or use do not become radioactive. For example, linens, clothing, tableware, dishes, toilet facilities may be used by others without special precautions.

- Your bodily wastes (urine and stool) are not radioactive.

Call your Urologist if you have any of the following:

- Unable to urinate for 4 or more hours. You may need to have a catheter placed for temporary relief.

- A fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher

- Pain that gets worse of does not go away

- Large amount of blood in your urine or stool

Call the Radiation Oncology Department at (614) 293-8415 with any questions or concerns about your seed implant. If you are calling after hours, the on-call service will answer and connect you to the doctor on call.

☐ Dr. ______________________ Phone: ______________________

☐ Nurse ______________________ Phone: ______________________

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