Radium-223 Therapy

What is Radium-223 therapy?
Radium-223, also called Xofigo, is a radioactive drug. It is given to treat pain caused by cancer that has spread to the bone (metastases). Since it is a radioactive drug, the amount of radiation in your therapy is based on your body weight. This therapy is given by IV (intravenous) injection once every 4 weeks for up to a total of 6 injections.

The Day of Your Appointment

- You need to take the Doan Hall elevators to the Nuclear Medicine Department on the 2nd floor of Doan Hall. Sign in at the Radiology registration desk.

- It is important to call Radiology Scheduling at (614) 293-4333 four days before your appointment if you need to cancel your therapy.

- If you have a question about your treatment, you may call the Nuclear Medicine Department at (614) 293-5774.

How do I prepare for Radium-223 therapy?
Before starting this therapy:

- Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal products.

- Tell your doctor if you are getting cancer treatments such as chemotherapy or radiation.

- You will need to have a recent bone scan before the start of therapy.

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

• You will have blood work done to check your blood counts 4 to 5 days before each time you get the drug.

Your doctor will order these tests and review the results each time you get Radium-223. Your therapy may be delayed if these test results are not available the day before your therapy appointment.

How is the Radium-223 therapy done?

Before you get the Radium-223, your doctor will talk with you about the treatment and any possible side effects. On the day of your therapy, the doctor in The Nuclear Medicine Department will also talk with you and ask you to sign a treatment consent form. Since Radium-223 is a radioactive material, your health care team will take special precautions when giving you this drug. Your appointment for the therapy takes about 2 to 3 hours.

When it is time for your therapy, you will be asked to lie down on a cart. A nurse will put an IV into a vein in your arm. You will get some IV fluids, and then the doctor will inject the dose of Radium-223 over one minute. You should not feel any different when the dose goes into your vein.

What should I do after therapy?

• It is important to have your follow up blood work done. Your blood counts will be checked 4 to 5 days before each dose of Radium-223.

• Drink plenty of fluids after your therapy.

• To help lower radiation exposure from body fluids to household members and caregivers, you need to follow good hygiene habits for 1 week after your last injection.

• When possible, you should use a toilet and flush at least 3 times after each use.

• If clothing is soiled (stool or urine), it should be washed right away and separate from other clothing. You and your caregiver should wear gloves when handling body fluids and then wash your hands.

• Wear a condom during any sexual activity. Men must not father a child for 6 months after this treatment.
What are some of the side effects?

• Nausea
• Diarrhea
• Vomiting
• Swelling in your hands or feet
• Low blood counts (platelets, red blood cells or white blood cells)

Call your doctor right away if you have:

• Signs of infection (fever or chills)
• Any bruising or bleeding
• Signs of dehydration (dizziness, lightheadedness, or dry mouth)
• Unable to urinate
• Unable to eat food or drink fluids