

HIGH DOSE RATE (HDR) BRACHYTHERAPY

Understanding My Treatment:

In this booklet you will learn about:

- High Dose Rate (HDR) brachytherapy for the prostate
- How to get ready for your treatment
- What will happen on the day of your treatment
- Side effects after treatment
- How to take care of yourself after treatment
- Who to call with questions



Sunnybrook
ODETTE CANCER CENTRE

A Cancer Care Ontario Partner

What is HDR brachytherapy?

- HDR brachytherapy is internal radiation where radioactive sources are put into your prostate for a short period of time (approximately 15-30 minutes).
- HDR brachytherapy allows for a large dose of radiation to be targeted to the cancer.
- The treatment is a procedure done in the brachytherapy suite at the Odette Cancer Centre. **You will not need to stay in hospital for this treatment.**
- Your treatment is given to you by a team of Nurses, Radiation Oncologists, Radiation Therapists and Medical Physicists.

What do I need to do to get ready for my treatment?

The day before the treatment:

- Start a clear fluid diet.
- Do not eat any solid food
- Try to drink at least 2 Litres of fluid to make sure you are hydrated
- Drink 8 ounces of **magnesium citrate** the afternoon before your treatment to clear out your bowels. You can buy this at your pharmacy
- If you take aspirin, ibuprofen, or arthritis medication, please talk with your healthcare team to see if you need to stop taking these medications one week before the treatment.
- Make sure you have a ride to and from the hospital the day of the treatment. You cannot drive after the anesthesia (medicine that makes you sleepy)
- Plan to have someone stay with you 24 hours after the treatment. This is for your safety.

What is a clear fluid?

A clear fluid is a liquid that you can see through at room temperature.

What are some clear fluid you can have?

Apple, cranberry, grape juice, gingerale, cola, lemon/lime softdrinks, Gatorade, PowerAde, black tea, black coffee (can add sugar but **NO milk or cream**), jello (no fruit toppings or whip cream), popsicles, lemon ice, broth, consommé.

It is very important that you do not drink milk, cream, any juice with pulp, or alcohol the day before the treatment.

The morning of the treatment: How do I get ready before I come to the Odette Cancer Centre?

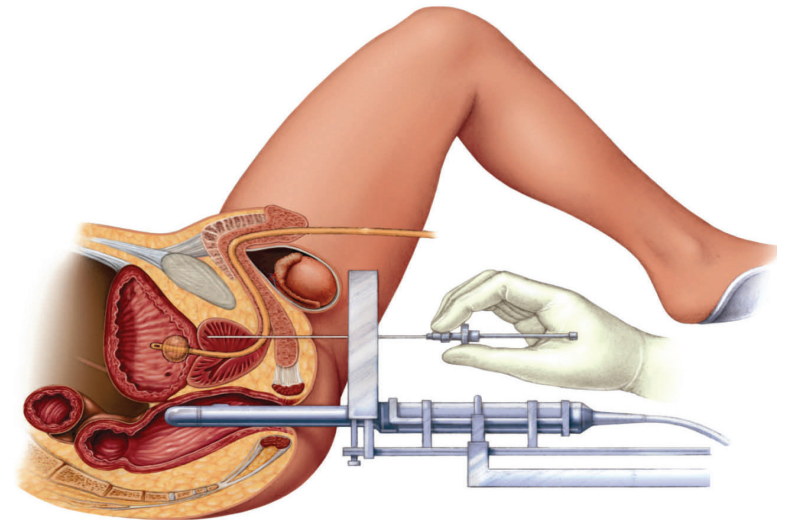
- Give yourself a fleet enema before you come to the hospital (buy at your pharmacy).
- For your comfort wear loose fitting pants such as track pants.
- Ask your healthcare team what medications you can take the day of treatment. Bring them with you and the Nurses will tell you when you can take them next.
- You may have clear fluids up to 2 hours before your treatment.

Are you diabetic?

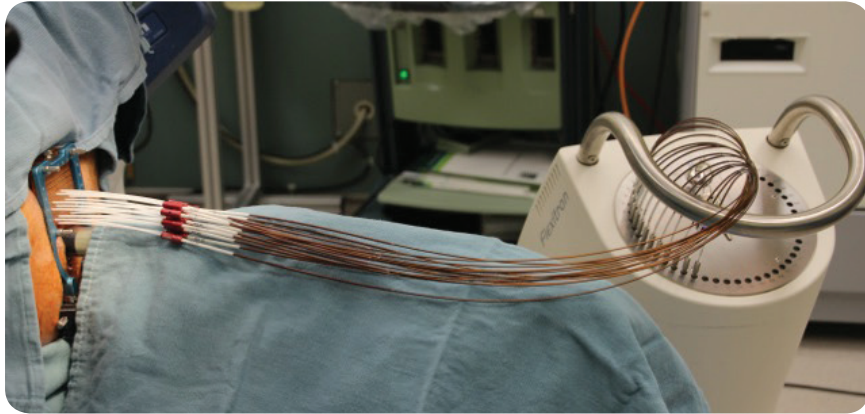
Please talk with a member of your healthcare team for advice on medication and blood sugar checks.

What do I need to know about my brachytherapy treatment?

- When you get to the Odette Cancer Centre please check in at the Ground Floor Radiation Therapy reception desk.
- A Nurse will get you ready for the treatment and start an intravenous (IV).
- You will be brought into the treatment room where the Anaesthetist will put you to sleep.
- The treatment is done with you asleep under anesthetic. You will not have any pain during the treatment.
- A catheter will be put into your bladder. It will be taken out after your treatment.
- An ultrasound probe will be put into the rectum to help insert the plastic needles into your prostate.

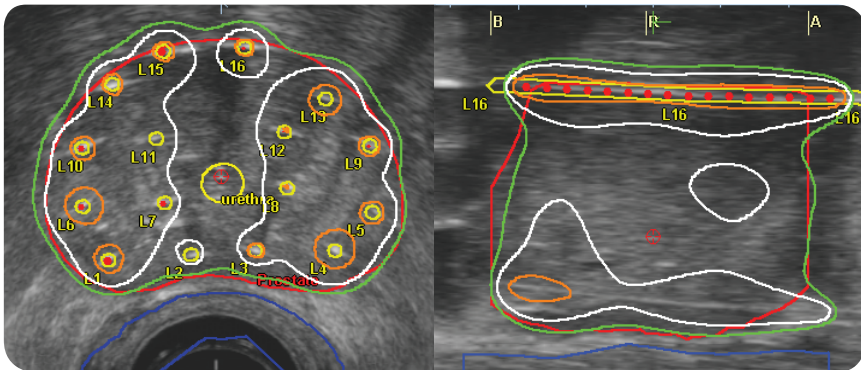


Ultrasound in rectum to guide needle placement



Radiation Therapist connects treatment machine to needles

- The plastic needles will be connected to a radiation machine through which the treatment will be given.
- The radiation treatment usually takes 10 to 15 minutes.
- After the treatment the needles will be taken out and you will wake up.
- You will go to the recovery room for 1 to 2 hours until you are ready to go home.
- The bladder catheter will be taken out before you leave.
- A Nurse will tell you about what you need to do at home before you leave the hospital.



Ultrasound showing Prostate in red and radiation dose levels

What are the side effects of this treatment?

This treatment delivers a high dose of radiation to the prostate which causes swelling. This has some short term side effects such as:

- Discomfort passing urine
- A need to urinate more often
- Slower urinary stream with a risk of urine blockage which may mean you will need a catheter (<2% risk)
- A feeling that you have not emptied your bowels
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Bruising or discoloration of the scrotum and penis

Other symptoms that you can have, and may need medication to help are:

- Impotence (the inability to have an erection)
- Decreased sexual satisfaction
- Lower volume of semen
- Diarrhea or pain with bowel movements
- Rectal bleeding
- Pain when urinating
- Incontinence (rare)

You will get prescriptions to help you empty your bladder more easily and for pain.

In very rare cases there may be serious damage to the rectum and bladder which may need a surgery to fix this.

How do I take care of myself after treatment?

- Do not drive 24 hours after the treatment.
- Drink lots of fluid for the first 2 days. This will help dilute the urine and help with the burning or urgency sensations.
- Do not drink alcohol or drinks with caffeine for the first 2 days after your treatment. This will help reduce irritation when you urinate.
- Place an icepack on the area between the anus and the scrotum for 10 minutes at a time, 4-5 times a day, over the next 2 days. This will help with the swelling.
- Take the medications the doctor prescribed after the treatment. Talk with your healthcare team to see if you can take anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen to help with pain or discomfort.
- Do not do any heavy lifting or ride a bike for the first 2 days after the treatment.
- To lower a chance for infection do not take a bath or swim for 2 to 3 days after your treatment. Showers are fine.

For people who are having external beam radiation therapy after brachytherapy:

- Before you leave the Odette Cancer Centre you will have a CT scan of your pelvis to plan your external beam radiation therapy treatment.
- Your external beam radiation therapy treatment will start about 2 weeks from your HDR prostate brachytherapy treatment.
- These treatments are given Monday through Friday, about 10 minutes per day, for 3-5 weeks.

Do you have questions about your care?

Please call the GU Radiation Nursing Team
416.480.5000 Ext. 81062

Do you have questions about your appointments?

Please call the Brachytherapy Booking Coordinators
416.480.5046

Do you have any questions?

Please write down any questions you have before your treatment and the health care team will answer these.

Want more information?

- Check out the Patient Education and Research Learning (PEARL) Centre on the 1st floor of the Odette Cancer Centre
Phone: 416.480.4534
Email: patienteducation@sunnybrook.ca
- Visit the Odette Cancer Centre Prostate Group website at sunnybrookprostate.ca
- Visit Prostate Cancer Canada at prostatecancer.ca

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