

Interstitial Brachytherapy

Brachytherapy is a type of internal radiation therapy. For this treatment, a device is placed into the vagina, and sometimes the uterus. The device is used to give a high dose of radiation to the area with disease.

You must stay in the hospital for 1 to 3 nights based on your treatment plan. The device remains in place during this time and you must lie flat so that that the device does not move. You are not radioactive after these treatments.

What to expect

Pre-Planning

You need an MRI about 1 to 2 weeks before the brachytherapy procedure. Your doctor uses the MRI images to begin making your brachytherapy treatment plan.

Your radiation team tells you when and where to check-in for your procedure. They also give you instructions for blood work, diet and bowel preparation.

Expect a call from a nurse to set up appointment for pre-admission testing. This testing is done so that you can get anesthesia during brachytherapy.

Placing the device

You are seen by the anesthesia team in the radiation department or operating room area. The anesthesia team gives you medicine to make you sleep during the procedure. A radiation doctor places a foley catheter to collect urine and then places the brachytherapy device. You wake up after the device is in place. Then, you have planning scans that the team uses to make your radiation plan.

While the team completes your plan, you stay in the radiation department. A family member can sit with you. You are given pain medicine as needed.

Treatment

Once the plan is ready, you receive your first dose of radiation. The device is attached to the radiation machine and it often takes about 10 to 20 minutes to give the treatment. The radiation does not hurt. Your team is just outside of the radiation room and they can see and hear you.

You will receive 2 to 5 radiation treatments based on your plan. The first dose is given on the day that the device is placed. Afterwards, you stay the night in the hospital and the floor nurses care for you. You must lie flat during this time so that the device does not move. Visitors are allowed.

Treatments can be given up to twice a day, but there must be a wait time of several hours in between treatments so that your body can rest. When it is time for your next treatment, a staff member brings you from the hospital floor to the radiation department.

After treatment

The device and foley catheter are removed after your last radiation treatment. Your team gives you special instructions to follow at home. Before leaving, you return to the hospital floor to be discharged. This process can take several hours.

Your team also gives you follow-up appointments for about 1 week and 1 month after your treatment.

How to reach your team



If you have any questions, please talk with your radiation team.

To reach your radiation doctor or nurse, call _____.