



WESTERN RADIATION ONCOLOGY
Brachytherapy Information

Day of the Procedure

During your implant, small radioactive seeds will be implanted directly into your prostate. The seeds are the length of a grain of rice and the thickness of a mechanical lead pencil. The seeds are inserted into the prostate using needles placed into the gland under ultrasound guidance. The needles are placed into the prostate through the perineum (the area between the scrotum and anus). There are no incisions (cutting). You will be asleep for the entire procedure. After the procedure you will go to the recovery room to wake up from the anesthesia. You will have little to no pain.

About 1 hour after your procedure, you will be discharged from the facility to go home. Because you will have been under anesthesia, you can not drive yourself or use a ride service. You must have a family member or friend available to drive you home. Please keep this in mind as your procedure will be canceled if you do not have a suitable ride home

Returning to Normal Activities

Because there are no incisions, you will be able to return to your daily activities immediately. You can return to work as soon as you feel ready to return (as early as the next day after the procedure). It is advisable to avoid lifting very heavy items or riding a bicycle with a hard set for 1 week after the procedure.

Post-Operative Follow Up

Please call our office 2 weeks after your brachytherapy if you are having any issues or concerns and we will schedule you for a phone follow up with your doctor. If you are going to have external radiation treatment after your brachytherapy, please call at that 2 week time frame as well and we will we will schedule you for a phone follow up with your doctor. During that call you will discuss your next step in treatment and we will make a referral.

Traveling on a plane after Brachytherapy

There are no travelling restrictions. Patients typically do not have any issues going through security after their procedure. If you would like medical clearance to fly, you can reach out to your surgery scheduler, and they can provide you with a clearance.



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Follow-up with your Urologist/PSA Test

Your PSA will drop significantly several months after completion of your brachytherapy procedure. It can take up to two years for the PSA to fall at its lowest level (nadir). You should continue to follow up with your urologist and get your PSA checked, typically every 5 months, following completion of brachytherapy. Please make sure to schedule a 1 month follow up with your urologist following your brachytherapy. Your next PSA should be checked no less than 3 months after your completion of Brachytherapy. You are still healing, and your PSA may not be as accurate if completed within 3 months prior to your procedure.

Post-Operative Radiation Precautions

Palladium (PD-103) is a radioactive isotope contained in the seeds. The half-life of Pd-103 is approximately 17 days. The radiation from the seeds diminishes exponentially over time.

In 17 days 50% of the radiation has been delivered, in 34 days 75%, in 51 days 87.5% and so on. The easy way to remember is that 75% of the radiation is gone in 1 month and essentially all gone by 2 months.

Because of this fast radiation decay, radiation precautions are necessary for only **6 weeks**. From the beginning. The radiation exposure to others is extremely small, but we ask you to follow the following guidelines:

- 1.No small children sitting in your lap for **6 weeks**. You do not need to avoid children at any time. The only precaution is to not have them in your lap for 6 weeks.
- 2.Keep some distance (3-6 feet) from pregnant women for **6 weeks**. Again, you do not need to avoid pregnant women just please be cautious and keep at the 3-6 feet recommended distance.
- 3.Wear a condom if you're going to have intercourse for **2 weeks**, as it is possible to pass a seed with ejaculation. No precautions are necessary for other adults and pets. You do not need to sleep separately from your spouse at any time. At no time are you or your bodily fluids radioactive. The Pd-103 is sealed within the seeds. You cannot contaminate surfaces by contact.



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Post-Operative Imaging

We are required by the Radiological Health Branch of the state of California to evaluate the quality of the implant and report any inadequacies should an implant not meet acceptable standards. We will obtain imaging in the operating room at the end of the procedure. We will reconstruct your prostate anatomy using imaging and conduct a detailed computer analysis of the radiation seed replacement. We typically perform this detailed analysis of your delivered radiation plan within one week after completion of your brachytherapy procedure. You will not need to be physically present for this process. The analysis is not diagnostic or determined if the implant was successful, therefore we will NOT call you with any results. This process, however, is the only way to verify that the seeds were implanted properly to deliver the radiation correctly to the prostate.

Side Effects

The main side effect of the implant is urinary difficulties due to swelling of the prostate. This swelling makes it difficult to empty the bladder. The most common side effect by far is getting up frequently at night to urinate. Other urinary complaints include slow stream, daytime frequency, and urgency. You may have burning with urination, but this usually resolves within 1-2 days. Rectal irritation is also possible but is less common. Rectal irritation may cause a sensation that you need to have a bowel movement. You may also notice the scrotum and surrounding area turning black and blue. This is just blood beneath the skin (bruising) from the needles. It is not painful and there is no need to do anything. It will resolve over a few weeks. The urinary and rectal side effects typically persist for about 4 weeks and then begin to resolve over the next few weeks. If you do notice no improvements, please reach out to your surgery scheduler.



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Side Effects cont.

The peak of the side effects usually occurs about 7-10 days after the implant due to the progressive irritative effects of the radiation. The severity of the side effects varies but they do improve. If you are not already taking Tamsulosin (Flomax) may already be prescribed by your urologist, you can request a prescription through your surgery scheduler. You will start taking this medication after the implant. You can also start it a few days prior to your surgery. This medication helps the bladder empty more completely so you go less frequently, especially at night. We also recommend anti-inflammatory medication naproxen (Aleve) one tablet in the morning and one in the evening. This will reduce the swelling and inflammation of the prostate and usually will help with the side effects. **Please check with your primary care doctor** before taking naproxen if you are on blood thinners or have kidney problems.

In rare cases, you will have urinary retention and may feel an inability to urinate after the procedure. If this happens, you will need the placement of a foley catheter to help empty your bladder, typically for a few days. You can reach out to your urologist or go to your nearest Urgent care/ED.

If your side effects are severe, please call the office 650-960-7397 or go to your nearest ED.

Western Radiation Oncology

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