



Chris O'Brien Lifehouse

Radiation Oncology Patient information

Prostrate brachytherapy

Prostate brachytherapy

Brachytherapy is a form of radiation treatment in which a radioactive source is placed directly into a targeted area such as the prostate gland. This type of radiation therapy can safely deliver a higher dose of radiation precisely to the target while minimising dose to the surrounding normal tissue. It is normally given in conjunction with a course of external beam radiation treatment for some types of prostate cancer. When administered with external beam radiation therapy, it is given in two parts, before and during the course of external beam radiation therapy, with a gap of two weeks between brachytherapy treatments.

If brachytherapy has been recommended by your Radiation Oncologist as part of your treatment plan, you will be booked to have your first implant before you start your external beam radiation therapy.

A staff member will contact you by phone to let you know a date and time for your brachytherapy treatments.

What to do before your implants?

The day before your brachytherapy implant, you will be required to drink a bowel cleansing preparation to clear your bowels. This ensures you have an empty rectum for the implant the following morning. Make sure you have been seen by one of our nurses at least one week before the implant. Your nurse will provide you with the brachytherapy preparation instructions.

- Blood test
- Chest X-Ray
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Pre-admission clinic

Bowel preparation instructions

The day before your brachytherapy treatment

- You may have a normal breakfast.
- You may have a light lunch.
- After lunch you may have clear fluids only.
- Mid-afternoon you should drink the first prepared sachet of Pico-prep (or equivalent).
- Late afternoon you should drink the second prepared sachet of Pico-prep (or equivalent). Leave at least 3 hours between each sachet.
- Nothing to eat or drink after midnight.

What happens during my implant?

The procedure involves the assistance of several members of our radiation therapy team. These include your Radiation Oncologist, an anaesthetic doctor, a registered nurse, two radiation therapists and a physicist.

On the day of your brachytherapy treatment, expect to be in the Radiation Oncology Department from 7.30am to 4.00pm.

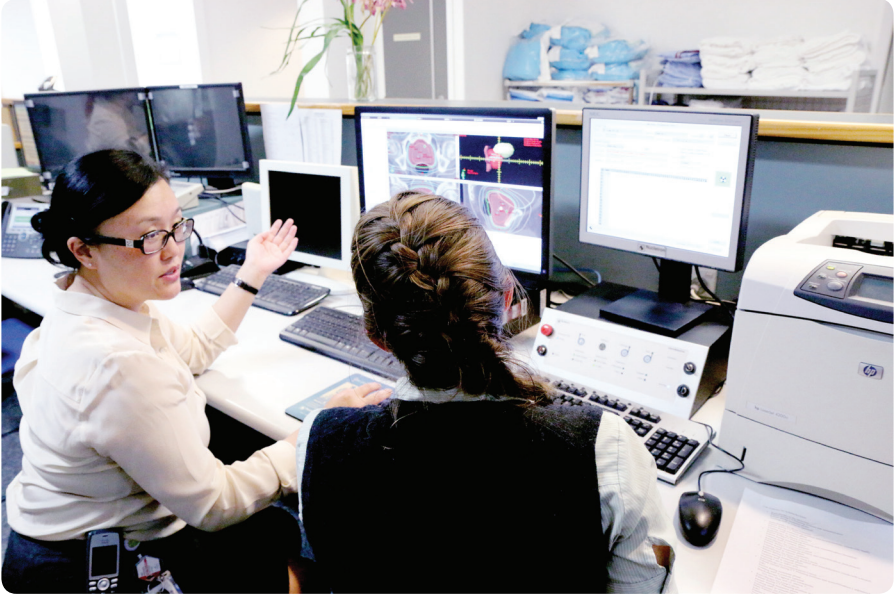
Your brachytherapy treatment is performed under local anaesthesia (spinal tap) in two stages in our operating theatre.

The first stage of your prostate brachytherapy treatment is the insertion of treatment catheters. Under ultrasound guidance, 18-20 hollow round ended treatment catheters are inserted into a plastic template, through your skin and into your prostate. This will take approximately one hour.

After the team is happy with the insertion of the catheters you will be transferred to a CT scanner. The CT scan is used to localise the catheters, the prostate and the rectum allowing us to plan the optimal dose.



What happens during treatment?



During **the second stage** of your brachytherapy treatment, your brachytherapy team will perform quality assurance checks on your treatment plan. The team will check all the planning and treatment information and measurements to make sure it is correct before taking you back into the brachytherapy theatre.

Once inside the brachytherapy theatre, your team will perform x-rays to verify the catheter position of your implant and make any necessary adjustments. The radiation therapists will then connect the catheters to the machine that contains the radioactive source. The machine moves the radioactive source by remote control through the catheters into your prostate.

Your treatment team will have to leave the treatment room to deliver the treatment. The Radiation Therapist will be watching you at all times using cameras and they can also hear you. The treatment should not cause any discomfort to you. If you need your Radiation Therapists for any reason, raise your hand or call out and your Radiation Therapists will come straight in.

After the treatment is complete, the catheters and the template are removed by your Radiation Oncologist. Our nursing team will monitor you in our recovery bay for the next couple of hours. Any family members or friends are welcome to join you here.

Treatment side effects

Side effects will vary from patient to patient. They may include:

- Small amount of bleeding [small clots in your urine];
- Inflammation of the prostate;
- Diarrhoea;
- Cystitis (burning while urinating). These should settle down within a week or so, but may flare up again when you start your external beam treatment; and
- Possible infection.

To find out about complementary therapies that might assist you to manage your symptoms and side effects, contact the LivingRoom team on 02 8514 0038 or email: livingroom@lh.org.au.

If you have any concerns or trouble urinating, please contact your Radiation Oncologist.

Weekly examinations

During your course of radiation therapy, you will be examined once a week by your Radiation Oncologist or Radiation Oncology Registrar. This will require a longer visit on that day and is essential for your treatment. Record your treatment review details below. A doctor is always available should you need to see someone outside these times.

Radiation Oncologist: _____

Radiation Oncology Registrar: _____

Clinic review time: _____

Treatment machine/phone number: _____

For more information about Radiation Oncology, please refer to our general booklet '*Explaining Radiation Therapy*'.

Useful links

Prostate health: <http://www.prostatehealth.org.au/>

The Cancer Council: <http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/prostate-cancer/>

Cancer Australia: <http://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/cancer-types/prostate-cancer>

Cancer Voices NSW: <http://www.cancervoices.org.au/>

Targeting Cancer: <http://www.targetingcancer.com.au/>

EviQ Cancer Treatment Online: <http://www.eviq.org.au/>

Notes



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www.mylifehouse.org.au