



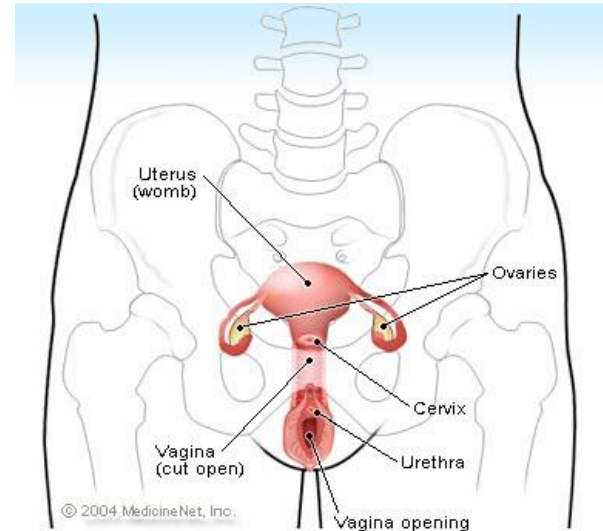
## Preparing for HDR Brachytherapy

This information pamphlet will provide you with the information you need to know about having high dose rate (HDR) brachytherapy treatment to the cervix or uterus. This treatment will occur once a week for four weeks.

### **What is brachytherapy?**

Brachytherapy is radiation therapy that is given close to or within a tumor site, avoiding surrounding tissue and organs.

The brachytherapy procedure begins in the Operating Room (OR) where treatment applicators are inserted into your vagina. You will be sedated for the procedure. These applicators are not radioactive. The applicators will only remain inside your cervix/uterus for the duration of the procedure. For the treatment you will be taken to the Oncology department. To see the cervix/uterus and the position of the applicators a planning CT scan will be taken of your pelvis before the treatment.





## Preparing for HDR Brachytherapy

### Preparation for the Procedure

#### Before the Procedure:

- Your radiation oncologist will discuss the brachytherapy treatment process during one of your scheduled weekly review times.
- Day surgery will contact you with detailed instructions including when to come and how to prepare for the OR procedure.

#### On the day of the Procedure:

- Please leave all valuables at home.
- Follow instructions given by Day surgery.



Treatment Applicator

#### During the Procedure:

- In the OR, the treatment applicators and a tube to drain your bladder will be inserted. You will then be taken to recovery.
- From recovery, you will be taken to the oncology department. A CT scan will be done for planning.
- You will be required to lay still and flat with your head slightly elevated until the procedure is complete.
- The planning portion can take up to an hour or more. Once the plan is ready, treatment is given.
- Three tubes are attached to the applicators. The treatment team will leave the room so the radioactive source can deliver your treatment. You are closely monitored by the treatment team. They can see and hear you at all times.
- The treatment time can take between 10 - 20 minutes. Once the procedure is complete, the applicators and the tube inserted in your bladder will be removed.



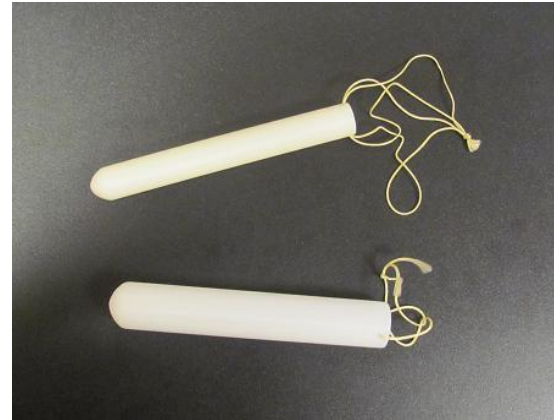
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### **After the Procedure:**

- You will return to Day surgery until you are cleared to leave.
- You cannot drive yourself home. You must arrange for someone to drive you home.

### **Side Effects that can Occur**

- You may experience some cramping.
- It is possible to have some light spotting for a few days.
- Vaginal, rectal, and/or bladder irritation may occur.



### **What to Do At Home?**

- If you have heavy bleeding or severe pain please call the Oncology Department at 648-6830, go to your family doctor or the closest emergency department.
- A dilator will be given to you and must be used to prevent the side effect of your vagina closing. Regular sexual intercourse is also helpful. This is important so that in the future you can be sexually active and your doctor can examine you.
- Use a large amount of lubricant (KY jelly, Replens) to aid with insertion.
- The dilator needs to go to the top of the vagina, gently push, and leave in for 10 seconds.
- Repeat 2 – 3 times per week.



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- Wash the dilator with warm soapy water and store (do not dispose).
- The dilator must be used for several months to years. Please talk to your doctor.
- The Radiation Oncology Nurse can be contacted Monday to Friday 8a.m. to 4p.m. at 648-6830. Please leave a message and we will call back.