



Brachytherapy for Skin Cancer

This information pamphlet will provide you with the information you need to know about brachytherapy to treat skin cancer.

What is brachytherapy?

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

During the procedure, an applicator will be placed over the lesion ('affected area') on your skin. The applicator is not radioactive. It is made from metal and plastic and will allow us to treat your skin. The applicator will only remain on your skin for the duration of the procedure.





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Preparation for the Procedure

Before the Procedure:

- At your first appointment with the radiation oncologist, an exam will be done of the affected area and photographs of your skin will be taken. A photo for ID purposes will be taken as well.
- Continue to take all regular medication(s) that you already take.

On the day of the Procedure:

- Have a light breakfast (ex: tea, coffee, toast, etc)
- Please leave all valuables at home.
- Register in the main lobby (Level1) before going to the Oncology Clinic.
- Check in at the front desk in the Department of Oncology (Level 1) and tell the secretary you are there for “Brachytherapy”. You will be given an ID armband.
- Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment.
- Please stop using any make-up, creams or lotions in the affected area.

The Procedure:

Inform us of any allergies.

Depending on the area to be treated you may be asked to dress in a hospital shirt and you may have your vitals (blood pressure, temperature, heart rate) taken by the nurse.

During the Procedure

- Once you are positioned on the treatment bed, the Doctor will perform an examination of your skin. The doctor will place temporary marks on your skin in the area to be treated.
- These marks must stay on your skin until all treatments have been given (this may be for several days).
- You will be required to remain still until the procedure is complete.
- The planning portion may take approximately 10 minutes. Once the plan is ready, treatment is given.
- For treatment, a tube is attached to the applicator. 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 5-10 minutes. Once the procedure is complete, the applicator will be removed. You may then go home.

Please plan to be with us for an hour.



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After the Procedure:

- You are able to leave immediately following the procedure.
- You are able to drive home.

Side Effects that can Occur

- You may experience some dry, red and itchy skin.
- The skin in the treatment area may become sore during the treatment period.
- The skin may become crusty and scab over. When the scab falls off, there will be healthy, new skin underneath.
- If you have treatment to a part of the body that has hair, you will have some hair loss. The hair will start to grow back some time after treatment has finished. This may take up to a year depending on your treatment. The regrowth may be patchy.
- This area will be more sensitive to the sun in the future.

What to Do At Home?

- You will be given skin care instructions and a follow up appointment after your last treatment.
- 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.

