



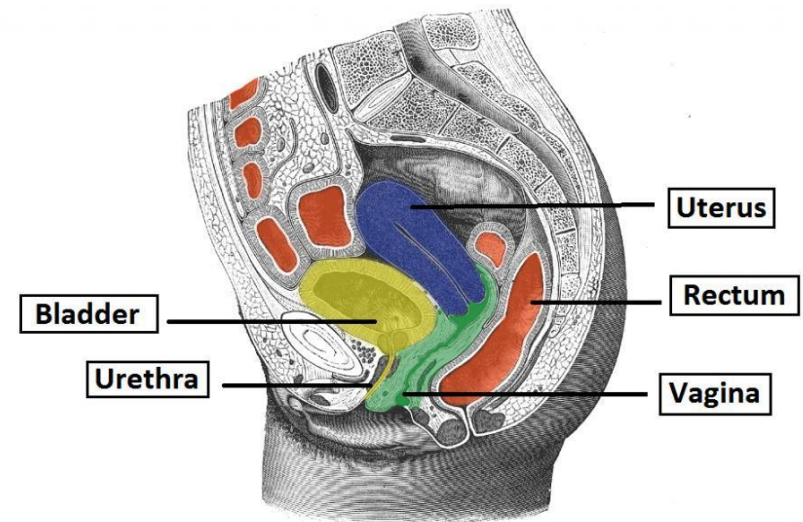
## Preparing for Brachytherapy – Vaginal Vault Procedure

This information pamphlet will provide you with the information you need to know about vaginal vault brachytherapy.

### **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, a vaginal cylinder will be inserted into your vagina. The vaginal cylinder is not radioactive. It is made from dense plastic and will allow us to treat your vagina. The vaginal cylinder will only remain in your vagina for the duration of the procedure. To see the vagina and the position of the vaginal cylinder, a planning CT scan will be taken of your pelvis before the treatment.





## Preparing for Brachytherapy – Vaginal Vault Procedure

### Preparation for the Procedure

#### **Before the Procedure:**

- 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.

#### **The Procedure:**

##### **Inform us of any allergies.**

You will be asked to dress in a hospital shirt and you will have your vitals (blood pressure, temperature, heart rate) taken by the nurse. You will be asked to empty your bladder just before the treatment.

#### **During the Procedure**

- You are positioned on the treatment bed with your legs placed in leg supports.
- The Doctor will perform an examination of your vagina. The vaginal cylinder will be inserted and held in place with special shorts.
- You will be taken to another room to have a CT scan. This scan is done for planning purposes only.
- You will be required to lay still and flat with your head slightly elevated until the procedure is complete.
- The planning portion may take up to an hour. Once the plan is ready, treatment is given.
- For treatment, a tube is attached to the vaginal cylinder/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 10 - 20 minutes. Once the procedure is complete, the vaginal cylinder/applicator will be removed. You may then go home.

Please plan to be with us for 2 to 3 hours.



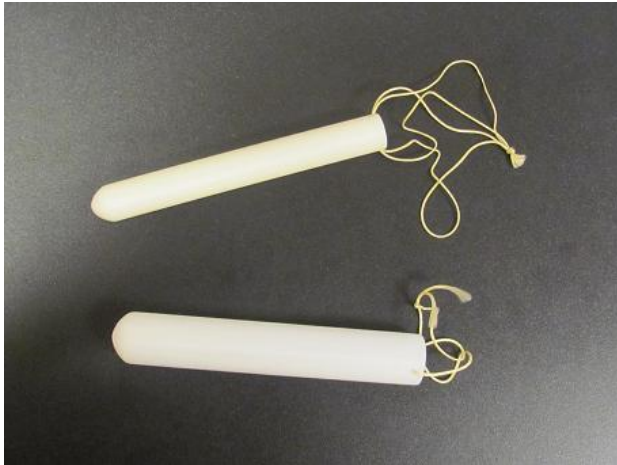
## Preparing for Brachytherapy – Vaginal Vault Procedure

### 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 cramping.
- Vaginal, rectal, and/or bladder irritation may occur.
- You should not experience pain from this procedure.



### What to Do At Home?

- If you have heavy bleeding or severe pain, please call the oncology department, 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 help insert the dilator.
- 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.
- 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.