

## Internal Radiation for Gynecological Cancer Inpatients

You will have internal radiation as part of your cancer treatment. Your cancer care team may call the treatment interstitial brachytherapy (IB). For IB, doctors put radiation sealed in small tubes inside the cancer. This factsheet tells what you can expect during IB.

**You will need to stay in the hospital until the radiation treatments are complete. Usually, the stay is for one night. Your doctor will tell you if you need to stay longer.**

### Before IB Starts

- The radiation therapy team will meet with you. They will explain the procedure and its risks and benefits.
- The team will make sure they have current results of your blood tests.
- The team will tell you about possible side effects and how to manage them.
- They will ask you to sign a consent form.
- You will get instructions about how to get ready for IB. You need to start preparing the day before the procedure. **Please do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before treatment.**

### Preparing for IB Treatments

1. On the day of the treatment, you will come to the Radiation Oncology clinic on the first floor of the Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) hospital.
2. You will change into a hospital gown, and a nurse will take you to the procedure room.
3. You will get medicines that numb parts of your body to block pain. They are given through shots in or around the spine.
4. The radiation doctor will put in a catheter to collect your urine. The doctor will also put in a device that holds the radiation tube in place.
5. You will get a scan. The team uses it to prepare the treatment plan that is best for you.

6. After the scan, transporters will take you to your room at the HCI hospital.
7. You must stay in bed until the treatments are complete. Your care team will put devices on both of your legs to prevent blood clots in your veins. You may eat and drink after the device is in place.

### The Treatments

1. Transporters will bring you to the radiation clinic at least three times for the treatments:
  - Later that same day
  - The next morning
  - That afternoonYour doctor may decide your cancer needs more treatment sessions. The transporters will take you back to your room between each treatment. The treatments have to be at least 6 hours apart.
2. After the final treatment, the radiation team will take out the device that holds the radiation tube.
3. You will go back to your hospital room where the team will help you get ready to go home.

### After IB

- You may have some spotting or bleeding. You may have some cramps. These should stop by the end of the day.
- You may have some burning when you urinate. You should drink 8–10 cups of beverages without caffeine such as water or fruit juices each day for the next few days.
- Your doctor may recommend that you douche with hydrogen peroxide.
- Radiation sometimes causes the vagina to tighten and narrow. The radiation team will give you a dilator to prevent this. See our factsheet “Vaginal Dilation after Radiation” to learn more.
- You may feel more tired than usual. This will get better slowly over time.
- Your doctors will talk with you about other possible side effects.

## **When to Call for Help**

Call your cancer care team if any of these things happen:

- Painful urination more than 24 hours after you go home
- Fever higher than 100.3° F
- Heavy or bright red bleeding from your vagina
- Foul smell from your vagina

### **Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.**

Radiation Oncology 801-581-2396

### **After hours, weekends and holidays**

801-587-7000

Ask for the radiation oncologist on call.