

Permanent Prostate Seed Implant

You are getting a permanent seed implant in your prostate as part of your cancer treatment. This factsheet tells about the procedure and the preparation for it.

This is a type of internal radiation. Your doctor will put tiny radioactive sources called seeds inside your prostate gland. The seeds are about the size of a grain of rice. They stay inside the prostate permanently.

The radioactive seeds kill cancer cells in the prostate. Some people who have seed implants also get radiation treatments from outside the body (external radiation).

Planning for the Implant

Anesthesia. General anesthesia keeps you asleep during the implant. If you have medical problems that make this dangerous, you will meet with the anesthesia team a week before your implant. Your cancer care team will schedule the appointment.

If you can have general anesthesia, you will meet the anesthesia team on the day of your implant.

Some patients get spinal anesthesia. The anesthesia doctor gives you a shot in your lower back. It numbs your body below the waist. You stay awake during the implant.

Consents and instructions. Up to one month before the implant, you will have an appointment at the Radiation Oncology Clinic on the first floor of the Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) Hospital. The radiation team will go over the procedure with you. They will answer your questions and concerns. You will get handouts with instructions to prepare for the procedure. There will be two consent forms for you to read and sign. One is for the implant procedure. The other is for ordering the seeds.

Preparing for the Implant

You must have someone else drive you home. The implant procedure and recovery time usually takes about 5–7 hours. Follow all the instructions you received when you signed the consents.

The Implant Procedure

Before the implant, an anesthesia doctor will give you medicine so you feel no pain. This may be through a vein in your arm (IV) or a shot in your lower back. The surgery team will put a tube called a catheter into your bladder to drain urine.

Your radiation doctor and urologist do the implant in an operating room at the HCI Hospital. They place hollow needles through the skin between the scrotum and anus. The doctors use x-rays and ultrasound images to check that the needles are in the right place. Then they put the seeds into the needles. The doctor takes the needles out, leaving the seeds behind.

After the Procedure

You will go to the Short Stay Surgery unit to recover. This unit is on the third floor of the HCI Hospital. Your recovery team checks to make sure all the seeds are in place.

For most patients, the recovery team removes the catheter that drains your bladder. If you don't urinate before you are ready to go home, you may go home with the catheter still in place. If you need a catheter, you will get instructions about how to care for it at home.

You will get prescriptions for medicines to prevent infection and help control side effects.

You can go home after the anesthesia wears off. This usually takes 3–4 hours. You will get a factsheet about taking care of yourself after the implant.