

High Dose Rate (HDR) Brachytherapy for cancer of the colon/rectum

What is HDR Brachytherapy?

- Brachytherapy is a type of radiation treatment in which a radiation source is placed inside the body.
- Brachytherapy allows a high dose of radiation to be given in or very close to the tumour.
- With brachytherapy, the healthy area around the tumour is exposed to only a very small amount of radiation.

Where do I go for Brachytherapy?

- Treatment takes place in the Brachytherapy Suite at the Juravinski Cancer Centre (JCC).
- You may need one or more brachytherapy treatments. Your radiation oncologist (doctor) will decide on the number of treatments you need.
- On the first day of treatment, go the reception area on Level 0 of the JCC. You will be directed to the review waiting room for your appointment.

What do I have to do the day before treatment?

- The day before your treatment, you will get a phone call from a JCC secretary who will tell you when to come in for your appointment.
- Do not smoke or drink any alcohol for 24 hours before treatment.
- Follow the instructions you were given for the bowel preparation, to make sure your bowels will be empty.
- Arrange for someone to come with you and take you home, **you will not be allowed to drive after the treatment.**

What do I do on the day of treatment?

- **Do not have anything to eat or drink for at least 6 hours before treatment.**
- Plan to be here for at least 2 to 3 hours. Your treatment should take about 1 hour.
- Take prescription medications if you need them as instructed by your Primary Team.
- Bring all of your prescription medications to the appointment in their original containers.
- Bring your health card.
- Leave all of your valuables at home.

What happens before treatment starts?

You will:

- meet your brachytherapy nurse to discuss your health history and have your blood pressure and temperature checked.
 - need to undress from the waist down and put on a hospital gown.
 - have an intravenous (IV) line put in your arm for medications and fluids needed during your treatment.
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What happens in the Brachytherapy Suite?

When you first arrive:

- You will see and meet many staff members who work together on your treatment.
- You will lie down in a comfortable position.
- Your heart beat and blood pressure will be monitored during the procedure.
- You will be given medication in your IV to keep you relaxed.

When your treatment starts:

- The doctor will use a flexible tube (scope) to place a treatment catheter (tube) into your rectum.
- The flexible tube will then be removed and the treatment tube will stay in.
- You will have an x-ray to make sure the catheter is in the right place.
- The treatment tube will be connected to the radiation machine.
- The staff will leave the room before the radiation machine is turned on.
- When the treatment is finished, the radiation source goes back into the machine and the tube will be removed.

What if I need help during treatment?

- **The team can stop your treatment at any time if you need help.**
- The team will not be in the room but they will watch you with cameras and talk to you over an intercom, if needed.

What happens after treatment?

- You will **not** be radioactive.
- You will be taken to the recovery area where you will stay until you are well enough to leave.
- You will be given your next appointment before you leave.
- Rest as much as possible when you get home, you may feel tired or drowsy for a few hours.

What if I have questions or concerns?

Call your Primary Team if you have question or concerns:

Doctor: _____

Nurse: _____

Chart Number: _____

Phone Number: 905-387-9495, extension _____

Call 905-387-9495 and ask to speak with your Primary Team if you have any of these problems:

- chills or fever (temperature higher than 38°C (100°F) or higher)
- heavy bleeding from your rectum

If you have any of these problems when the JCC is closed, go to the Emergency Department.



Juravinski Cancer Centre
699 Concession Street
Hamilton, Ontario L8V 5C2
905-387-9495