

High Dose Rate (HDR) Brachytherapy for cancer of the esophagus and lung

What is HDR Brachytherapy?

- Brachytherapy is a type of radiation treatment in which a radiation source (a tiny pellet) 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.
- You may need one or more brachytherapy treatments. Your radiation oncologist (doctor) will decide on the number of treatments you need.

Where do I go for Brachytherapy?

- Treatment takes place in the Brachytherapy Suite at the Juravinski Cancer Centre (JCC).
- On the first day of treatment, go the reception area on Level 0 of the JCC. You will be directed to RESSCU (Rapid Evaluation and Symptom Support Cancer Unit) 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.
- 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 after midnight, the night before the treatment.**
- Plan to be here for at least 2 to 3 hours. Your treatment should take about 1 hour.
- Bring your health card.
- Leave all of your valuables at home.

Do I take my medications on the day of treatment?

- Take prescription medications as scheduled with sips of water.
- Do not take diabetic medications the morning of treatment.
- Do not take blood thinner _____.
- Bring all of your prescription medications to the appointment in their original containers.

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 up 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:

- You will have the back of your throat 'frozen' with a spray.
- A flexible tube (scope) and the treatment catheter (tube) will be put in your mouth and down into your esophagus/airway.
- The flexible tube will be taken out 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 radiation machine is turned on, the radiation source travels through the treatment tube to treat the tumour.
- 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 able to leave.
- You will be given your next appointment before you leave.
- Do not eat or drink for 3 hours after your treatment.
- 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: **Dr. Ranjan Sur**
Clinical Specialist Radiation Therapist: **Emilia Timotin**
- Nurse: _____
- Chart Number: _____
- Phone Number: **905-387-9495**

If there are further questions or any concerns please dial 905-387-9495 and leave a message with the administrative assistant and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

If you have any of the problems listed below contact your Primary Team during work hours or go to the nearest Emergency Department:

- chest pain, difficulty breathing or swallowing
- chills or fever (temperature higher than 38°C (100°F) or higher)
- coughing large amounts of blood
- increased difficulty swallowing or painful swallowing



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