What is interstitial radiation?
Interstitial radiation is a way to give radiation to a small area. This involves the placement of needles directly into the tumor site. This way less normal tissue is affected. Your doctor can give a higher dose of radiation in a shorter time than with external beam radiation.

This type of treatment is quite involved. You may have an epidural catheter placed into your back during the entire procedure. This will allow us to give pain medicine directly to your pelvis. The Anesthesia Screening clinic staff will discuss this in more detail. Patients that require an epidural or spinal anesthesia may need a pre-surgical screening visit.

Screening includes:
- a physical exam by your radiation oncology doctor
- blood work
- chest x-ray
- EKG.

Your radiation oncology doctor may request laparoscopic assistance to place the needles. If so, you may also need to see a gynecologic oncology doctor prior to your implant.

The radiation procedure involves placing instruments into the vagina. Usually this is a small cylinder-like tube. Most commonly, a small template with holes is slid over the cylinder. It rests against the perineum (the skin around the vagina). Small hollow needles are inserted through the holes in the template. These tubes go into the tumor site. (See diagram on page 3). Other times the needles are placed using a different type of instrument in the vagina. They may also be placed directly into the vagina without the template. They are then sewn directly to the skin of the perineum. These instruments will be placed in the operating room (OR).

After the instruments are placed you may be taken to Radiology or Radiation Oncology for imaging. This imaging is used to help create your treatment plan. You will then go to the recovery room. After you are awake you will be moved to your room. You may be moved to the Radiation oncology clinic for a CT scan to plan the radiation treatments. When your radiation doctor has all the information needed to start your treatment plan, you will return to your hospital room. Once the plan is finalized, you will be brought to the Radiation Oncology Clinic on your bed to start your treatment.

The radiation sources are inserted into the small hollow needles. They will remain there until the desired radiation dose is delivered. This can take 10-25 minutes. Treatment times vary. Usually the treatments are given twice a day (morning and afternoon). Your doctor or nurse will explain your treatment plan to you. Once all of the radiation treatments are done, the needles and other instruments will be removed.
How to prepare your bowels:

1. **48 hours or 2 days before the implant:**
   Start a clear liquid diet. Clear liquids are foods which are liquid at room temperature. Examples of clear liquids include: clear broth, consommé, tea, coffee, decaf coffee, Jello®, carbonated drinks, hard candy, clear fruit juices (cranberry, grape, apple, cherry) and fruit ades or ices made from allowed juices.

   **Start on:**
   ________________________________
   upon awakening.

2. **24 hours or 1 day before the implant:**
   Drink 2 - 10 oz bottles of magnesium citrate. You can buy these at any drugstore. They do not require a prescription.

   **Start on:**
   ________________________________
   upon awakening.

3. **The evening before the implant:**
   Give yourself 1 Fleet’s® (phosphate) enema. You can buy this at any drugstore. It does not require a prescription.

   **Start on:**
   ________________________________
   around dinnertime.

4. **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight**

If you have any questions or problems doing the bowel prep, please call the Radiation oncology Department at **(608) 263-8500**.

**Day before Implant**
The time of your implant will be set the business day before the implant. A nurse from the First Day Surgery (FDS) Center will call you the business day before the implant. They will tell you when to arrive, where to go, and answer questions. **If you don’t hear from them by 3:00 pm, please call (608) 265-8857.** If you wish to stay in Madison, a **Housing Accommodations Coordinator, (608) 263-0315** can provide you with a list of nearby motels and arrange for your stay at a discount rate.

**Day of Implant**
Please check in at the FDS Center located at E5/3 at your scheduled time. Leave your valuables such as jewelry and money at home or with a family member. We ask that your family bring your belongings to your room **after** the procedure.

While you are in FDS, they will help you get ready for your implant. You may have family with you when you arrive. Due to limited space, you will need to choose a **primary support person.** This is the only person who may stay with you from check-in time until you go for your implant. When choosing a primary support person, keep in mind this person may hear your private health information. There is a waiting room for other family members and friends. After the check-in process is complete, they are welcome to see you in your FDS room for a short 5 minute visit.

You will need to change into a gown. An intravenous line (IV) will be started. The staff will review your medicines, allergies, and medical history. During this time you will also meet the anesthesiologist.

The anesthesiologist may place an epidural catheter in your back. This gives you pain medicine to make you comfortable. This will be removed when the radiation treatment is over. They may also use a general
anesthesia. This means you would need to have a breathing tube placed. The tube will be removed before you leave the operating room (OR).

Your radiation oncology doctors will be in the OR to place the instruments. You may be awake depending upon the type of anesthesia chosen. Let us know if you feel any pain. A catheter will be placed to drain urine from your bladder. It will stay in until the radiation treatment is done. The radiation oncology doctors may request help from a gynecology oncology doctor by using laparoscopy to help guide the needles.

Below is a picture of the implant.

![Implant Diagram]

After the implant is placed you will be taken from the OR to the recovery room. You may then be taken to your room, the Radiation oncology clinic for a CT or View Ray scan, or radiology clinic for an MRI.

Your entire hospital stay may be 4-7 days. This is based on your treatment plan. Due to the position of the implant, your movement will be limited. Your nurse will help you to change positions. You will have a catheter in your bladder. You will not be able to get up to go to the bathroom. Compression stockings will be placed on both legs. This is to help blood flow and prevent blood clots from forming. You will also get shots in your stomach to help prevent blood clots. A soft diet will be provided for you. When the radiation treatment is completed, the implant will be removed in the Radiation Oncology Clinic. If you have an epidural catheter, it will be removed in your room. When you are able to get up and walk without help, you will be discharged home.

**Home Care Instructions**

1. Some vaginal spotting or bleeding is expected. This should stop within 1-2 days. You may bring a sanitary pad from home. If not, we will give you one. Do **not** use tampons.

2. Do not put anything into your vagina for 2 weeks unless instructed to do so by your treatment physician. Douching can disrupt the body’s natural chemical balance.

3. A catheter will be placed in your bladder while you are in the hospital. You may have some irritation or burning after it is removed. You should drink 8-12 glasses of fluids each day for the next 1-2 days.

4. You may have some discomfort or soreness around the vagina. We will give you a prescription for pain medicine if you need it.

5. Our experience shows women who use a sitz bath often (4-6 times per day) feel more comfortable and heal faster. You can use your bathtub or we can give you a sitz bath. To use the portable sitz bath, place it on the toilet and fill it with lukewarm water. You may add some cornstarch if you wish, just enough so the water turns white. Use this as often as you need – but remember more often is better.

6. You may be given a prescription for an antibiotic. Follow the directions on the bottle. Be sure to take the entire prescription.
7. You will be given a vaginal dilator to use at your first follow-up visit. The radiation may cause the vagina to become narrow and tight. The dilator is used daily to help maintain the vaginal opening. You will receive instructions later.

8. It is safe to have sexual intercourse after the implant. It may be uncomfortable for a while.

9. You are not radioactive after the implant is removed.

10. Call the radiation oncology staff for any of these symptoms:
    • Fever above 100°F.
    • Pain that is not relieved with medicine.
    • Bleeding more than a normal menstrual period.
    • Burning with urination or blood in the urine lasting more than 24 hours.

    Call the Radiation oncology Clinic at (608) 263-8500. If the clinic is closed, your call will be transferred to the answering service. They will put you in contact with the doctor on call.

    Your doctor is:

    ____________________________________________

    Phone Number:

    ____________________________________________

    If you have more questions or concerns regarding this procedure, you may also contact:

    ____________________________________________

    Phone Number:

    ____________________________________________

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 8/2017. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5329