Breast Brachytherapy (Balloon Catheter)
Using Ultrasound Guidance in Radiation Oncology

Breast brachytherapy is a radiation treatment used in early stages of breast cancer. A plastic catheter with a deflated balloon at the tip is placed into the breast at the site of cancer. A radioactive seed travels into the catheters to deliver radiation directly to the cancer site. This decreases the amount of radiation that goes to healthy tissues.

If you need to stay overnight in Madison during your treatments and would like help finding a local hotel at a discount rate, please contact our patient housing coordinator at 608-263-0315. Some local hotels offer shuttle service to and from the hospital.

Important items to review before Catheter Placement

The catheter placement is scheduled for __________________________.

This procedure will take 1 to 1½ hours.

Please inform the nurse of your current medicines. Your nurse will give you instructions on which prescription medicines can be taken the morning of the procedure.

You will be given prescriptions mentioned below. You will need to have these filled and follow the instructions listed below. If you do not take them as prescribed, you must tell your doctor before the catheter placement. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have allergies to any of these medicines.

- EMLA® cream. This is an anesthetic cream that you will put on the skin. Apply to your breast 2 hours before the catheter placement. Cover the cream with a clear plastic dressing (Tegaderm®) or Saran® wrap and tape. The dressing will keep the cream on your skin. Apply at ____________.

- Valium® 5mg. This is a sedative and anti-anxiety medicine. Take 1 to 2 tablets, 1 hour before the catheter is placed. Keep on taking it only if needed. Don’t drive if you take this medicine. Take at ________________.

- Percocet® or Roxicet® (oxycodone with acetaminophen) 5mg/325mg or Norco® (hydrocodone with acetaminophen) 5mg/325 mg may be prescribed. This is a narcotic pain medicine. Take 1 tablet 1 hour before the catheter is placed. Keep on taking it if needed. Don’t drive if you take this medicine. This medicine can cause constipation. Take at ________________.
• Naproxen sodium 220 mg (Aleve®, for example). This is an anti-inflammatory medicine. It will reduce the pain and swelling. Take 1 tablet 1 hour before the catheter is placed. **Keep on taking this medicine 2 times a day through your treatments.** You may drive if you take this medicine. **Take at __________________.**

Check with your doctor if you take any blood thinning medicines. These may need to be stopped at least 1 week ahead of time. See the list below.

• Aspirin or products that contain aspirin, Ectotrin®, Excedrin®
• Heparin
• Coumadin®
• Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs Advil®, Motrin®, Aleve®, Nuprin®
• Some herbal medicines

**Day of Catheter Placement**

The date of catheter placement: __________________________.

You will be receiving sedation for your procedure. Please arrange for someone to drive you to the hospital and walk you down to the Radiation Oncology Clinic. Also, you will need a driver to take you home after the procedure. You should not drive or make important decisions until the next day.

You may not eat or drink anything **six** hours before the catheter placement. **Do not eat or drink past ________am/pm.**

Apply the EMLA® cream and take the prescribed medicines at the given times.

Wear comfortable clothing. A button-down shirt will be easy to take off and put on.

Report to Radiation Oncology (K4B100) at _____________.

If you are allergic to Lidocaine®, epinephrine, contrast dye, or Latex, please let us know.
The catheter placement is a sterile procedure. You will be lying on your back for about 1 to 1½ hours. First, you will have a breast ultrasound to locate the correct site of the fluid filled space from your surgery where your tumor was located (lumpectomy cavity). This will help place the balloon catheter. Second, your breast will be cleaned with an iodine based cleanser. Third, sterile towels and drapes will be placed around the site.

Your doctor will use a pen to draw on the skin to identify the lumpectomy cavity. This is where the balloon catheter will go to give your radiation treatments.

Your doctor will inject Lidocaine® with epinephrine to numb your breast. If you have an allergy or a reason why one of these medicines cannot be used, please tell us.

Your doctor will make an incision (about 1 inch) above or to the side of the lumpectomy cavity to insert the balloon catheter. The balloon at the end of the catheter is deflated at this time.

Your doctor will guide the catheter through the incision into the lumpectomy cavity with the assistance of ultrasound.
Once the catheter is in the correct position, your doctor will inflate the balloon. It will cover the entire lumpectomy cavity. You may feel some pressure as the balloon is inflated.

Once the catheter is placed, your doctor or nurse will apply antibiotic ointment around the catheter and cover with a sterile dressing. A special support bra will help keep the catheter in place and will be applied after your Planning CT scan.

**Directly after Catheter Placement**

You will have your Planning CT scan directly after your catheter insertion. A CT scan is a computerized x-ray that will be used for treatment planning. This will take about 20-30 minutes.

When the CT scan is over, a nurse will look at the catheter site and clean the skin around it. Antibiotic ointment will be put around the catheter. A new dressing will be put on and secured by the support bra. You will be given a schedule for your treatment times.

You may eat and drink liquids after the CT scan.

**Evening after Catheter Placement**

Because of the medicine you took before the procedure and the IV sedation, you may feel tired. Plan to take it easy the rest of the evening.

You may have some pain when the numbing medicine wears off. This is normal. Take the naproxen as scheduled and the pain medicine if you need it. An ice pack on top of the dressings may help relieve the pain.

Do not get the dressings or catheter wet. Do not remove the support bra. Sometimes, the dressings may shift. Wash your hands before you adjust the dressings.

Your arm motion might be slightly limited because of the catheter. Avoid lifting more than **10 pounds** with the arm on the treatment side.

**Weekend**

If your catheter will be in over a weekend, the nurse will teach you how to take care of yourself during that time.

**Radiation Treatment Appointments**

Every day, once in the morning, check in at Patient Registration at Main Street in the hospital. You will also check in at the Radiation Oncology Clinic (K4/B100), twice a day, before each treatment to inform the nurse you are here. You will have 2 treatments a day, with at least 6 hours between each treatment. Each treatment will last about 45 minutes to 1 hour. You will see a doctor at each treatment. The total number of treatments is determined by your doctor. Most patients receive 10 treatments, 2 treatments a day for 5 business days.

For your morning treatment, you will have a CT scan to make sure the balloon catheter has not moved. If it has moved, your doctor will rotate it back into position. For your afternoon treatment, a medical physicist will ultrasound your breast. This is to make sure the balloon has not deflated.

There are smaller catheters inside the larger balloon catheter. They will be connected to the radiation treatment machine by several cables. The radioactive source travels into each catheter, one by one, until the treatment is complete. Most people do not feel pain during the treatment. You will hear a clicking sound from the treatment machine.
You will be alone in the room during the treatment, but the staff will see you on a TV monitor and be able to talk with you.

After the treatment is over, the cables will be removed. A nurse will clean around the catheter and apply a new dressing before you leave.

Neither you nor the catheter are radioactive. You are not a risk to your family and friends.

**Completion of Treatment**

After the last treatment, your doctor will deflate the balloon and remove the catheter. Most often there is little or no pain or bleeding. You may want to take at least 1 pain pill before you arrive for your last treatment.

The nurse will teach you how to care for yourself after treatment and give you any supplies you will need.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us.

Radiation Oncology Clinic: 608-263-8500
If you live out of the area: 1-800-323-8942. Ask for the Radiation Oncology Clinic.

If the clinic is closed, the phone will be transferred to the paging operator. Ask for the Radiation Oncology doctor on call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.