

HDR Brachytherapy for Gynecological (female) Cancers Vault Procedure

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What is HDR (High Dose Rate) Brachytherapy ?

Brachytherapy (pronounced brack-ee-ther-a-pee) is a form of radiation treatment. It uses a radioactive source that is put in or near the cancer. This allows a high dose of radiation to be given directly to the tumour so it is called HDR Brachytherapy.

You may need more than one treatment. Your radiation oncologist will decide how many treatments you will need.

You will likely be booked for brachytherapy treatment once a week during the last few weeks of your external radiation treatments, or after your external radiation treatments are complete.

What will happen on the day of treatment?

- The procedure takes place in the Brachytherapy Unit at the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre.
- Register at the Radiation Therapy reception desk 30 minutes before your treatment.
- Bring your provincial (MSI) health card.
- Bring all of your medicines, in their original containers.
- Take your regular medicines at the usual times unless you are told otherwise.
- What happens during the treatment?
- The procedure will take about 90 minutes on the first day and about 30 minutes on the other treatment days.
- There will be several staff in the room.
- You will lie down on a special table. The radiation oncologist will put the treatment applicator into position in your vagina.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

- If you have any cramping or pain during the procedure, tell the radiation therapist.
- When your custom treatment plan is ready, the radiation therapist will connect a plastic tube to the treatment applicator. The radiation will move from a special machine through the tube and into the applicator to give the treatment.
- During the treatment, the team will leave the room. They will be able to see you and hear you when the treatment is being given.
- The team can stop the treatment at any time if you need help.
- Your treatment will last about 5-10 minutes. After the treatment is done, the radiation therapist will disconnect the tube and remove the applicator.

What happens after the treatment?

- We will review the instructions for your care at home with you.
- If you need more than one treatment, we will give you the date and time of your next treatment. Each treatment follows the same steps.
- After your last treatment, we will give you a follow-up appointment.

Special instructions

- Do not have sexual intercourse (sex) once you start your brachytherapy treatments. You may return to sexual intercourse 2 weeks after your brachytherapy treatments are finished, as long as you do not have pain, large amounts of bleeding or an infection.
- You will get information on how to use a vaginal dilator when your treatments are complete.

What if I have questions?

Please feel free to ask your health care team any questions you have about your treatments.

Doctor: _____

Nurse: _____

Contact

Call 902-473-6067 and choose option 5 to leave a message for your radiation oncologist or nurse.

If you have any problems from your treatment after hours, call 902-473-2220 and ask to speak to the radiation oncologist on call.

Looking for more health information?

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>
Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider. The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.

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