



HIGH DOSE RATE BRACHYTHERAPY

TREATMENT OF THE OESOPHAGUS

High dose rate brachytherapy consists of administering radiation to the affected or diseased tissue. Because a dose of radiation is directed to a very precise location while preserving healthy tissue, side effects are minimized. A specialized team made up of radio-oncology technologists, the nursing assistant, the medical physicist and the doctor will be taking care of you. The treatment is not painful and does not require you to be hospitalized. **Please be reassured that there will be no danger of radioactive transfer to your loved ones after the treatment.**

PREPARING FOR TREATMENT

THE DAY BEFORE

Do not eat any solid food from 12 pm (noon) on the day before your treatments. You are allowed to consume diet supplements such as *Boost*[®], *Ensure*[®] and chicken bouillon before midnight.

You must **fast completely, from midnight the night before** all treatments (8 hours without eating, drinking or smoking). Early in the morning before your examination, you may only have a sip of water and you may take your personal medications.

THE DAY OF THE TREATMENT

YOUR ARRIVAL

On the day of your treatment, go to the reception desk for day appointments on the 6th floor of the CHUS – Fleurimont Hospital at 7:45 am (morning).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE TREATMENT?

INSTALLATION OF THE CATHETER

First you will be directed to the gastroscopy room. We will observe your lesion and measure its exact location in the oesophagus. The gastroenterologist will then insert a catheter in your throat and fix it in place with stabilizing tape. This procedure is not usually painful but it can sometimes be uncomfortable. Once the catheter is in place, you will be taken by stretcher to the radio-oncology where you will remain for one hour, under surveillance by one of our staff members.

You will then be taken to a radio-oncology room for a CT-scan. This examination generates radiological images to pinpoint the regions to be treated with radiation. From the images obtained, the medical physicist will make the necessary calculations for your treatment. During this time, you will be in a waiting room, resting on a stretcher. The person who accompanied you may join you there.

Once the calculations have been made, you will be taken to the treatment room where the technologist will attach the catheter to the treatment device.

This catheter is used to place the radioactive source in the exact position determined by the physicist and your doctor. Once the treatment has been completed, the doctor will remove the catheter. Before leaving, we will check your vital signs to be sure that you are doing well. We will also suggest that you drink a bit of water or eat a little snack.



Oesophagus
catheter

IMPORTANT

You cannot drive after your treatment. You must therefore be accompanied.

WILL I BE GIVEN ANY MEDICATION?

Before introducing the catheter into your mouth, the doctor or nurse will give you a local anesthetic (freezing) in your throat. You will feel as if there is mucus in your throat, but it will not prevent you from breathing or swallowing. The anesthesia will help suppress most of the feeling of nausea. Your doctor may also give you an injection to relax you. **If you have allergies to any medication, you must tell your doctor.**

HOW LONG SHOULD I EXPECT THE SESSION TO TAKE?

You will be at the hospital for about 3 hours, which will include:

- the gastroscopic examination;
- the CT-scan;
- waiting time (60 to 75 minutes);
- the treatment itself (5 to 30 minutes);
- a period for observation of your general condition before you leave the hospital (minimum of 15 minutes).

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS?

Keep in mind that each person reacts differently and you may not have any side effects. Possible side effects include:

- fatigue after the treatment;
- discomfort, sensitivity around the treatment site for some time;
- difficulty swallowing;
- pain in the oesophagus;
- sputum tinged with blood.

SIGNS OF COMPLICATIONS TO WATCH FOR

Advise the brachytherapy team immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms after your treatment.

If you did not have chemotherapy:

- a fever higher than 38.3 °C for more than 24 hr. (take temperature orally).

If you had chemotherapy:

- a fever above 38.3 °C (take temperature orally);
- persistent or increasing pain in the treated area;
- sputum with significant bleeding or clots;
- any other symptom that worries you.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FOLLOW DURING TREATMENTS

Drink water when you eat. If inflammation makes it more difficult to swallow, mash your food, divide up your meals and eat smaller quantities, but more often. If you have questions or difficulties concerning your diet and/or eating, a nutritionist is available at the CHUS to meet with you and discuss this.

YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENTS

After the first treatment, the radio-oncology technologists will confirm your next appointments.

INFORMATION



You can reach the brachytherapy team at 819-346-1110, ext. 14602, Monday to Friday, between 8 am and 4 pm.



If the clinic is closed, call Info-Santé at 8-1-1.



Should any of the symptoms listed above worsen, go to the nearest hospital emergency department.

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Revision and Layout

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