

After Your HDR Cervix Brachytherapy Procedure

This handout offers information on what to do after each HDR cervix brachytherapy procedure. After your procedure treatments, it is safe for you to be around other people (including children and pets). You are not radioactive.

After each HDR cervix brachytherapy procedure

You may have side effects from your HDR cervix brachytherapy procedure. If you had external beam radiation you may already have some of these side effects. The HDR cervix brachytherapy procedures may make these side effects worse. Common side effects include:

- Redness, irritation and soreness in your vaginal area
- Small amounts of bloody drainage
- Fatigue
- Burning during urination
- Frequent or urgent need to urinate
- Diarrhea or loose stools

What you can do after each HDR cervix brachytherapy procedure

- Take acetaminophen (also called Tylenol) for pain or cramping. Take all of your prescribed medications.
- Drink 8 to 12 cups of fluids (1 cup = 250ml) for 24 hours after you go home.
- Wash your treated area with soap and warm water. You can take showers.
- Use a Sitz bath to help clean, soothe and heal your irritated skin. Your healthcare team can provide you with the '[Sitz Bath Instructions](#)' handout.

What you cannot do after each HDR cervix brachytherapy procedure

- Do not drive for 24 hours.
- Do not make any legal or financial decisions for 48 hours.
- Do not drink alcohol, take cannabis or any other 'substance' not prescribed to you for 48 hours.
- Do not use a tampon. Wear a sanitary napkin or pad.
- Do not take a bath or use Jacuzzis, hot tubs or saunas.
- Do not have sexual intercourse (sex).

Sexual activity

- Your radiation oncologist will tell you when it is ok to start having sex after your brachytherapy treatments.
- Radiation therapy to your pelvis area may cause your vagina to feel dry and tight. It can also cause scarring. This scarring can make your vagina narrower and less flexible. This may cause you to have pain with a pelvic exam or with sex.

- A vaginal dilator is a device that you put inside your vagina to keep it open for a period of time. At your last treatment appointment, you will be given a vaginal dilator and told how to use it. It is important you read the handout on [Using a Vaginal Dilator](#).

Go to the Emergency Department at the hospital closest to you if you:

- Have a fever above 38.3° C/100.9°F at any time or above 38.0° C/100.4°F for more than an hour.
- Have a severe pain in your abdomen.
- Have bleeding that soaks through one or more pads every hour.
- Still have burning when you urinate more than 24 hours after your procedure.
- Have foul smelling discharge or itchiness from your vagina

If you have a problem or concern about a symptom or side effect from your cancer treatment:

1. Call your primary nurse at the cancer centre from Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm, (except on holidays). Use the phone number your primary nurse gave you.
2. Contact CareChart Digital Health from Monday to Friday, 4 pm to 8:30 am and anytime on weekends and holidays for symptom management support.

Talk to a nurse using one of these options:

- Call the after-hours telephone line at 1-877-681-3057.
- Request a video call by going to carechart.ca.
- Use the CareChart Digital Health App. This App is available to download for iOS or Android devices.

Call 911 or go to the Emergency Department at the hospital closest to you for a medical emergency.

The next steps in your care

We will give you an appointment to see your radiation oncologist 4 to 6 weeks after your last HDR cervix brachytherapy procedure.

Talk to any member of your healthcare team if you have questions or do not understand any of the information in this handout.

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