

TRANSPERINEAL INSERTION OF FIDUCIAL MARKERS AND RECTAL SPACER GEL

Introduction

Radiotherapy is an effective way to treat prostate cancer by using high-energy x-rays to destroy or damage cancer cells. It is given in daily intervals known as fractions to allow time for healthy cells to repair and cancer cells to die. One of the side-effects is the scatter of radiation beams onto surrounding structures, such as the bladder, bowel and urethra. This causes short term symptoms such as urgency and frequency, as well as long-term complications such as bleeding and difficulty controlling bladder or bowel movements. Placing fiducial markers (gold seeds) into the prostate may help with treatment planning to target the cancer and reduce scatter. Additionally, rectal spacer gel can be injected with a fine needle to move the rectum away from the prostate. The gel is made of hyaluronic acid and dissolves after 6-9 months. Like a prostate biopsy, the procedure is performed through the perineum under sedation or general anaesthetic.

Rectal spacer video (2:55 mins) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8Wlyg9hYc8>

What are the risks of surgery?

Common (>10%)

Bruising and discomfort

Blood in the urine (for a few days) and semen (for a few weeks)

Occasional (1-5%)

Infection

Unsuccessful placement of seeds or rectal spacer gel

Rare (<1%)

Anaesthetic or cardiorespiratory problems - intensive care

Chest infection, clots in the legs and lung, stroke, heart attack, death

Rectal injury (inadvertent injection of seeds or hydrogel into the rectal wall)

What should I do before surgery?

- Do not eat, drink, or chew gum for 6 hours before surgery
- If you are on blood thinning medication, discuss this with your surgeon

What should I expect after surgery?

You can go home 2-4 hours after surgery once the nurses have checked that your vital signs are stable, and you are passing urine normally. Please use Psyllium husks or Movicol twice daily as required to keep the stool consistency soft, especially in the first few weeks. Contact your radiation oncologist to let them know that you are ready to have your planning scans and start the radiation treatment.