INTERSTITIAL IMPLANTS-PATIENT INFORMATION

Introduction

Radiation is frequently utilized to treat patients with gynecological cancers. Often the doses of radiation required to kill the tumor with external beam radiation will be substantial, and may result in injury to the rectum and/or bladder. In view of this, interstitial implants may be used to deliver high doses of radiation to the tumor while sparing injury to the rectum and/or bladder. The overall goal is to safely and effectively kill all the tumor cells and minimize side effects to normal tissue. The implant is referred to as the Martinez Universal Perennial Interstitial Template named after the doctor that developed it. (M.U.P.I.T.)

Procedure

In the operating room and under anesthesia (general or regional block) hollow needles are inserted into the tumor and surrounding tissue by the radiation oncologist. These hollow needles are held in place by a template (MUPIT) which is sutured to the skin in the perineal (pubic) area. The template remains in place while you are receiving radiation. Placement of an epidural catheter by the anesthesiologist or a PCA (patient control pain pump) pump provided by the hospital Pain Service will be used for pain control. The day after surgery, a CT Scan will be done. Information from this scan will be used to calculate the correct dose of radiation. The first treatment usually starts within 12 hours of the CT Scan. All treatments will be given in the Radiation Oncology Department. There are usually 4-6 treatments and they are given twice a day at least 6 hours apart. When each treatment is completed, you will be returned to your hospital room.

Restrictions

You will be at absolute bedrest. This means you will not be able to stand or sit while the template is in place. You may have your head elevated 30 degrees, or shift from side to side. There will be a catheter in place to drain urine. To minimize bowel movements, you will be on medication and a low-residue diet.

Medications

Please make a list of the medications (including herbals, supplements, etc.) you take on a routine basis and give this to your doctor. It is important that you continue to take your routine medications while you are in the hospital.

Removal of Implant

The template is removed after the last radiation treatment and is done in the Radiation Department by the radiation oncologist. Prior to removal, pain medication will be given to minimize any discomfort you may experience. Once the template is removed, you will be returned to your hospital room.

Visitors

Visiting hours are designated by the host hospital and are posted in patient care areas.

Discharge

After the template and urinary catheter are removed, you will be observed for a brief period of time. This observation period is to ensure that there is no bleeding and that you can urinate on your own. You will also be given pain medication and antibiotics to take home. If you receive chemotherapy as well during the hospital stay, you may stay in the hospital longer for observation or to complete the remainder of chemotherapy.