

The use of spacers

Treatment for prostate cancer



We provide rectal spacers as part of our standard pre-radiation therapy treatment for prostate cancer to reduce the side effects of treatment and improve your quality of life.

Prostate cancer rectal spacers

Spacers are an effective technique to reduce the side effects of prostate radiation therapy. They protect the rectum during radiation treatment by moving it away from the prostate gland. Studies have shown that patients experience fewer bowel-related, urinary and erectile dysfunction side effects and improved quality of life compared with those who don't have a spacer inserted.

The absorbable spacer is injected during a simple procedure and is gradually absorbed and eliminated naturally from the body through your urine. When fiducial markers are required, they may also be inserted at the same time as the spacer, but this will be discussed with you in advance.

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At GenesisCare we offer spacers to patients who haven't had their prostate removed and who are undergoing conventional radiation therapy for prostate cancer or prostate reirradiation.

How is the spacer inserted?

Spacer insertions are routinely performed under local anesthetic at several of our outpatient centers as a safe and convenient alternative to having the insertion under general anesthetic within a hospital environment.

Your radiation oncologist or your urologist will use a needle to insert the spacer between the prostate and the rectum. It is a minimally invasive procedure that takes around 15 minutes. The biodegradable spacer stays in position during your radiation therapy treatment cycle.

What happens afterwards?

The spacer stays in place throughout the course of your treatment and is gradually absorbed by the body naturally.

Most people recover quickly from the procedure without suffering any side effects. We'll provide you with some aftercare advice following an insertion under local anesthetic.

Are spacers for prostate cancer safe?

Spacers have been shown in clinical studies to be safe and effective, and they are approved by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE). With the spacer in place, your consultant can target your cancer while reducing the risks of side effects compared to having radiation therapy without the spacer. You may notice some temporary discomfort at the injection site and feel some rectal fullness. Both these feelings normally pass quickly. There is also a very small risk of infection that can be treated with antibiotics if required.

How do spacers work?

The spacer pushes the rectum away from the prostate. This creates a protective gap that helps prevent damage to the rectum. The cancer cells can be accurately targeted while healthy organs and tissue are protected, reducing many side effects.

Who can benefit from spacers?

Spacers can be used with both internal and external radiation therapy. They are routinely used worldwide, but spacers aren't for everyone. Your doctor is the best person to advise you.

Source
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