SpaceOar/Barrigel Hydrogel and Fiducial Placement

SpaceOAR/Barrigel hydrogel placement is an in-office procedure that is performed prior to a patient undergoing radiation therapy for prostate cancer. A hydrogel placement may help reduce rectal injury by acting as a spacer between the rectum and the prostate. This can help push the rectum out of the high dose radiation region. The hydrogel spacer is safe and similar to other products used in brain surgery, cardiology and ophthalmology. It is typically not felt by the patient once in place. The hydrogel spacer remains in place for 3 – 6 months during radiation treatment and is then absorbed by the body. Research has shown that the benefits of a rectal spacer include reduction of rectal toxicity resulting in improved bowel functions, improvements to urinary function and a higher likelihood of maintaining sexual function.

How do I prepare for my procedure?

1) Stop blood thinners as indicated by your provider, including baby Aspirin.
2) Start your antibiotics the night prior to your procedure, you will take them twice a day for 3 days. You need to do a Fleet enema 1 – 2 hours prior to your procedure. (This can be picked up over the counter at your pharmacy.)

What happens during a hydrogel placement?

If performed in the office, the hydrogel placement will be performed while you are awake. We do encourage the use of nitrous gas, sometimes referred to as 'laughing gas', during the procedure. You may feel a pinprick and/or pressure at the injection site. The hydrogel is injected as liquid through a small needle inserted between the rectum and the prostate. Your provider will use ultrasound imaging to ensure correct placement. After the procedure you may experience some temporary discomfort at the injection site but this discomfort should resolve shortly. You should be able to resume normal activities but always check with your provider as well as your Radiation Oncologist.

What are the potential risks of a hydrogel placement?

As with any medical treatment, there are some risks involved with the use of SpaceOAR or Barrigel Hydrogel. Potential complications include, but are not limited to, pain associated with the injection or the hydrogel itself, needle penetration or Hydrogel injection of the bladder, prostate, rectal wall, rectum, or urethra, inflammation, infection, urinary retention, rectal bleeding, constipation, diarrhea, urinary urgency or leakage, or erectile dysfunction.

When should I call the office?

-Unresolved or excessive bleeding
-Problems urinating
-Signs of infection
-Fever over 101 or chills
-Increasing pain or pain that does not improve after taking over the counter pain medication

If you have any questions or concerns please contact our office between Monday-Thursday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm or Friday 8:00-1:30 pm at 512-451-7935.

Last Updated: 9/2024

Fiducial Markers

Fiducial markers are tiny metal objects (about the size of a grain of rice) that are placed into your prostate prior to radiation therapy for prostate cancer. They allow your Radiation Oncologist to line up the beams of radiation to make sure that your therapy is delivered exactly the same way each time. This helps them to target your tumor and avoid your healthy tissue. The fiducial markers will stay in your prostate after your treatment.

What happens during Fiducial Marker placement?

Your provider will use a rectal ultrasound to visualize your prostate tissue. They will then insert tiny needles into your prostate through your perineum, which is the area of skin between your scrotum and anus. Your provider will place 2-4 fiducial markers into your prostate through the needles. In many cases SpaceOAR will be performed afterwards.

How do I prepare for my procedure?

1) Stop blood thinners as indicated
2) Start your antibiotics the night prior to your procedure. You will take it twice a day for 3 days.
3) Fleets enema 1-2 hours prior to your procedure

What can I expect after Fiducial Marker placement?

You may have a feeling of fullness in your rectum for the next 2 days. This is normal and won't affect your bowel movements. If you have any pain, you can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). You can drive and do your normal activities 24 hours after your procedure. Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) for 1 week after your procedure.

When should I call the office?

-Unresolved or excessive bleeding
-Problems urinating
-Signs of infection
-Fever over 101 or chills
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If you have any questions or concerns please contact our office at 512-451-7935.

Important Contact Information

Midtown Urology

911 W. 38th Street, Suite 200

(512) 451-7935 phone

(512) 451-7965 fax

If you need to reach the doctor after hours for an urgent matter, please call our office at 512-451-7935 and follow the prompts to be connected with the on-call provider.

Last Updated: 9/2024

You may also go to Seton Main Emergency Room on 38th and N. Lamar. Please only go to this hospital as our physicians have privileges there.

Hospital for Emergencies

Seton Main Medical Center

1201 W 38th St, Austin, TX 78705

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