Radioactive seed implants are a form of radiation therapy called brachytherapy. Iodine 125 (I-125) is the type of seed implants that will be used for your prostate cancer treatment.

Seed implants are placed during outpatient surgery and give off radiation to treat cancer. Most of this radiation is absorbed by the prostate gland but a small amount is present outside of the body. The amount of radiation will decrease with time. There are certain measures you need to take to be sure that those around you are protected.

The Procedure
The procedure takes about 1 hour. No surgical incision or cutting is needed. A doctor implants radioactive seeds into the prostate gland using an ultrasound for guidance. The number of seeds and where they are placed is determined by a computer generated treatment plan tailored to each patient. Anywhere from about 40 to 100 seeds may be placed.

After general or spinal anesthesia, your legs are elevated and padded. An ultrasound probe is inserted into the rectum and is used to take pictures of the prostate. Radioactive seeds are loaded into the needles being used. In a specific order, each needle is inserted through the skin in the area between the base of the scrotum and the anus and into the prostate using ultrasound for guidance.

Once the seeds have been implanted, a catheter may be placed into the bladder through the opening of the penis to drain urine. An ice bag is usually placed between the legs to reduce swelling to the implant area.

You may have some blood in the urine, which will drain from the catheter. Drink plenty of water to flush the bladder and help prevent blood clots. The bleeding may last for several days, so do not be alarmed.

The catheter is usually removed several hours after the procedure. After it is removed, it is normal to have some burning with urination.

Contact your doctor if you cannot pass your urine within 6 hours after it is removed.

Side Effects
There are some side effects from the procedure that are a result of swelling and irritation of the prostate caused by the radiation.

These may include:
- Slight bleeding beneath the scrotum
- Discomfort behind the scrotum
- A weaker urinary stream
- The need to urinate more often or urgently
- Burning with urination
- Blood in the urine
A very small number of patients feel fullness in the rectum or a sense of constipation. This usually goes away in a few months.

**To help decrease side effects, for a few weeks:**

- Increase the amount of water you drink.
- Avoid food and drinks that have caffeine such as coffee, tea, colas and chocolate.
- Avoid acidic foods and liquids such as citrus products.

If your side effects are bothersome, medication from your doctor may be helpful. If any of these symptoms are very uncomfortable, contact your doctor.

**Call your doctor right away if you have:**

- Severe bleeding
- Large blood clots in your urine
- Severe pain
- Difficulty with urination

**Passing a Seed**

For 2 weeks after the implant, it is possible to lose a seed through urination or ejaculation. The seeds are silver in color and the size of a grain of rice. If you find a seed, flush it down the toilet. If you need to move a seed to the toilet, use tweezers or a spoon to pick it up. **Do not handle the seed with your fingers.**

**Precautions for People near You**

People around you will not become radioactive by being close to you, but they may be exposed to low levels of radiation. To protect people around you from radiation exposure, follow these guidelines.

**Time:** The amount of radiation exposure increases the longer a person is in close contact with you. Keep your close contact time to a minimum for the first 8 weeks after the implant.

**Distance:** The further people are from the radiation seeds, the less radiation they will receive. The amount of radiation that is given off drops quickly as distance is lengthened. There are no time limits at a distance of 6 feet or greater from the person with the implants.

**When closer than 6 feet, follow these time limits:**

- People who are more than 45 years of age and who do not expect to have any more children do not have to limit the time spent with or the distance from the person with the implant.
- Children less than 18 years of age and women who are or may be pregnant need to remain at least 6 feet away from you for the first 4 months. (Except for a quick hug.) Limit contact to 5 minutes or less per day.
- Children should not sit on your lap for 60 days after seed implants.
- You may sleep in the same bed as your partner as long as she is not pregnant or under the age of 45.
- Sexual intercourse, using a condom, may be resumed 4 weeks after the implant. Your semen may be discolored dark brown or black. This is normal and is a result of bleeding that may have occurred during the implant. After 8 weeks, you will no longer need to use a condom.
Radiation Therapy Patient Card

Patients are issued a “Radiation Therapy Patient Card” which states that the patient has had a prostate implant procedure that may cause a small radiation exposure.

Keep this card in the patient’s wallet until the expiration date on the card.

If the person with the implants is hospitalized or dies within 16 weeks of the implant, call the Radiation Safety Officer at 614-234-7368.

If you have any questions or concerns about the implants or radiation safety, please ask your doctor, nurse, or radiation therapist.