

## **COPING WITH YOUR DIAGNOSIS**

Learning that you have cancer can be a very difficult experience. After the cancer diagnosis, you may feel anxious, completely overwhelmed and left wondering how to cope with all the changes in the immediate future. Here are some of our suggestions:

- **Get the facts about your cancer diagnosis.**

Gather basic, useful information from sources such as your doctors, nurses, recommended literature and/or the internet. Bring a trusted friend or family member to your first few visits. Write down the questions that arise to present to your nurses and doctors during your weekly visits.

- **Keep all lines of communication open.**

It is very important to maintain an honest, continuous dialogue with your doctors, nurses and caregivers. Opening up to loved ones, sharing your daily thoughts and feelings is essential to your care and managing the fears that may arise with a new cancer diagnosis. Expressing your emotions can only provide a canvas we can all gain strength from and react to in a mindful, meaningful way

- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.**

Appropriate exercise and a healthy diet can only improve your energy levels and help reduce or eliminate the stress and fatigue that may arise with cancer and its treatments.

- **Accept help.**

People offer help because they care about you. Learn to accept this help from friends, family, and community resources. Let them run errands, drive you to your treatments, or do household chores, for example. This kindness also gives them a sense of contribution during difficult times. Using these resources can help you immensely, as well as your primary caregiver, with planning your daily activities.

- **Review your goals and maintain priorities.**

Determine what is most important to you. Reduce the meaningless activities in your life and participate in the enjoyable ones. It's trite, but true: take each day one at a time. Setting daily and weekly goals can be just as effective and rewarding as focusing on long term goals.

- **Develop your own coping strategies.**

Practice relaxation and set aside times to be alone -- reflect. Keep a journal. When faced with a decision, list the pros and cons for each choice and work through it systematically. Remain involved with work and leisure alike as long as neither is taxing. Find your source of spiritual support, whether it be religion, close friends, or favorite activities/hobbies. Remember this: What comforted you through problematic times before your diagnosis will often ease your worries now. Just be open to at least trying new avenues.

- **Manage your anxiety.**

The coping strategies listed above all play their part in reducing and managing anxiety. Moderate to severe anxiety can interfere with a patient's ability to concentrate and comprehend the wealth of information accumulated with a new diagnosis of cancer. Turn to your doctors and nurses. Through their patience and perseverance, you can acquire a thorough understanding of your disease and its treatments as well as the role you play in the successful management of the anxiety associated with the cancer experience.

Jimmy Daniels  
Mgr. Nursing  
Services

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## ONSIBILITIES

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## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A PROSTATE IMPLANT

### The first 2 Weeks: (Honeymoon)

#### *Day 1...*

You have returned to your home after the Foley catheter was removed. You need to take it easy around the house. Apply ice to the implant site (perineum). I recommend a frozen bag of peas. Take a bag of peas, place in a Ziplock bag and mash the peas to conform to the implant site. Each bag will last forty-five (45) minutes to one (1) hour. Ice for two (2) hours on and two (2) hours off. Do not sleep with the ice pack on.

General complaints consist of burning with urination, frequency and urgency to urinate. Often a patient will be urinating at night every two (2) to three (3) hours. The following list of medications will help with these problems.

#### **MEDICATIONS:**

1. **Medrol dose pack (steroid).** The pills are attached to a card.

##### ***Instructions:***

Taper over two weeks. The package is designed to be taken over 6 days. The rule to apply is dividing the number of pills to take in one day by two (2). Example—the day one (1) row of pills contains 6 pills.  $6/2 = \text{three (3)}$ . Take three (3) pills the first day and three (3) pills the second day. This will last for 12 days. Do not refill.

2. **Cipro 500mg or Levaquin 500mg (antibiotic).** Prevents infection.

##### ***Instructions:***

Take the Cipro twice a day for seven (7) days or take the Levaquin once a day for seven (7) days. Do not refill.

3. **Flomax 0.4mg (beta blocker).** Dilates the urethra.

##### ***Instructions:***

Take the Flomax thirty (30) minutes after your evening meal. If you eat late at night then

consider taking the drug around 6:00 PM. This medication may be doubled to two (2) pills each evening if you experience difficulty with your urinary stream. Do not take more than two of these pills a day.

**SIDE EFFECTS:** This medication may make you feel dizzy, unbalanced by dropping your blood pressure. If this persists, please call your nurse.

**4. Azo-Standard 95 mg (topical anesthetic).** Relieves burning urination.

**Instructions:**

Take one tablet up to three (3) times a day for burning with urination. DO NOT take this drug unless you have burning with urination.

**SIDE EFFECTS:** With extended use, calf cramps and/or generalized tiredness is possible. This medicine does not require a prescription.

**5. Naprosyn. (Systemic analgesic NSAID).** Trade name: Aleve. Relieves discomfort at the implant site. Does not require a prescription.

This medication is rarely needed. Only take this medication twice (2) a day for pain at the actual site of the implant.

***The First Three Days After The Implant...***

You should return to your normal activities. Do not lift anything over fifty (50) pounds for the first week. The problems with urination should begin to slowly improve over the next ten (10) days. Take the prescribed medications as indicated.

***By day three...***

You should resume your normal activities. I would encourage each of you to be as active as you can be with no lifting limitations. The only activity I would restrain from for a period of one month is riding a bicycle.

***By week three...***

The frequency of urination may increase, possibly worse at night. These symptoms may become progressively worse over the next two (2) weeks and peak at four (4) to six (6) weeks after the implant. This is the time period patients would experience any severe urinary problems.

*Although this may be upsetting, be assured these problems will resolve over the next two (2) months to three (3) months. The improvement in urinary symptoms is slow and gradual, with approximately a 25% to 35% improvement each month. I would anticipate these urinary symptoms to possibly continue for the duration of five (5) to six (6) months after the implant.*

You will be scheduled for a post-implant CT scan and a Follow Up with me about one month after your implant.

If you have any questions, please contact the nurses at the Austin Cancer Centers location you were evaluated.

ACC Central (MLK) 512-505-5500

ACC NW..... 512-531-5200

ACC North.... 512-901-1180

## **RADIATION THERAPY TO THE PROSTATE**

### **What to Expect**

#### **Treatment Planning:**

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Prior to the start of radiation, there are several steps that are instrumental in the planning of your treatments. First, there will be a simulation procedure. The process consists of molding a form around the lower section of the body and drawing external marks on the pelvis. At the end of this set-up procedure, the external marks will be marked with a permanent, pin point size tattoo. Secondly, there will be a CT scan and MRI (if ordered by your doctor) done for the planning process. The *simulator therapist* will schedule the CT scan at one of the following facilities:

**Austin Cancer Centers NW**  
11111 Research Blvd.  
Austin, Tx 78759

**Austin Cancer Centers Central**  
2600 E MLK  
Austin, Tx 78702

A nurse will contact you to discuss the time and location of the scan.

After the simulation, CT scan and MRI have been done, allow 7-10 business days for the planning process to be completed. A therapist will call you to give you a start day and treatment time.

#### **Daily Treatments:**

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- When receiving treatments to the prostate region, you will be asked to remove your pants and shoes.
- The treatment will last approximately 30 minutes.
- Once positioned on the treatment table, an ultrasound will be done to verify the treatment region. There will be slight pressure on the bladder.

#### **Patient Responsibilities:**

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##### **Before your CT scan:**

- The rectum should be empty.

- Empty your bladder 45 minutes prior to the scan.
- Drink approximately 16 ounces of water 30-45 minutes before the scan.

**Before your daily treatments:**

- The rectum should be empty.
- Do not empty your bladder 45 minutes prior to treatment.
- Drink approximately 16 ounces of water 30-45 minutes prior to your treatment.