High Dose Rate (HDR) Brachytherapy for the Treatment of Prostate Cancer

This information will help you get ready for your HDR brachytherapy (BRAY-kee-THAYR-uh-pee) treatment to your prostate at MSK.

Read through this resource at least once before your brachytherapy procedure and use it as a reference in the days leading up to your treatment.

About Your Prostate

Your prostate is a walnut-sized gland that lies below your bladder, in front of your rectum. It surrounds your urethra, which is the tube that drains the urine from your bladder (see Figure 1). Your prostate adds fluid to your semen (ejaculatory fluid).
About HDR Brachytherapy

Brachytherapy is a type of radiation therapy. Radiation therapy kills cancer cells by making it hard for them to multiply. In brachytherapy a radiation source is placed directly into or next to a tumor.

With HDR brachytherapy, your healthcare provider will place needles inside your prostate gland. These needles will be attached to tubes that will deliver the radiation source into your prostate. After your treatment, the tubes and needles will be removed.

There are 2 steps for your HDR treatment:

1. You’ll have a procedure to place the needles into your prostate. This will be done under anesthesia, so you’ll be asleep.
2. You’ll have your HDR treatment(s), which are also called fractions.

   ○ You may have 1 or 2 treatments. Your radiation oncologist will discuss this with you.

   ○ Your first treatment will be done in the operating room, right after your needle placement procedure. If you need a second treatment, it will be done on the same day.

   ○ After treatment, the needles will be removed.

   ○ You’ll go home the same day you have your treatments.

Use this space to write down the plan your radiation oncologist made for you:

   
   
   
   
   

Your role on your radiation therapy team

You’ll have a team of healthcare providers working together to provide the right care for you. You’re part of
the team, and your role includes:

- Arriving on time for your procedure.
- Asking questions and talking about your concerns.
- Telling someone on your radiation therapy team when you have side effects or pain.
- Caring for yourself at home.
  - Quitting smoking, if you smoke. If you want to quit, call our Tobacco Treatment Program at 212-610-0507.
  - Drinking liquids as instructed.
  - Eating the foods suggested by your radiation therapy team.
  - Maintaining your weight.

**Getting Ready for Your Procedure**

You and your care team will work together to get ready for your procedure.

Help us keep you safe during your procedure by telling us if any of the following statements apply to you, even if you’re not sure.

- I take a blood thinner, such as:
  - Aspirin
○ Heparin
○ Warfarin (Jantoven® or Coumadin®)
○ Clopidogrel (Plavix®)
○ Enoxaparin (Lovenox®)
○ Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)
○ Apixaban (Eliquis®)
○ Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)

There are others, so be sure your healthcare provider knows all the medications you’re taking.

- I take prescription medications (medications my healthcare provider prescribes), including patches and creams.
- I take over-the-counter medications (medications I buy without a prescription), including patches and creams.
- I take dietary supplements, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, or natural or home remedies.
- I have a pacemaker, automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD), or other heart device.
- I have sleep apnea.
- I’ve had a problem with anesthesia (medication to
make me sleep during surgery) in the past.

- I’m allergic to certain medication(s) or materials, including latex.
- I’m not willing to receive a blood transfusion.
- I drink alcohol.
- I smoke or use an electronic smoking device (such as a vape pen, e-cigarette, or Juul®).
- I use recreational drugs.

**Consider banking your sperm**

For more information, read *Sperm Banking* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/sperm_banking](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/sperm_banking)) and *Building Your Family After Cancer Treatment: Information for Men* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/building_family_men](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/building_family_men)).

**Presurgical testing (PST)**

You’ll have a PST appointment before your procedure. The date, time, and location will be printed on the appointment reminder from your healthcare provider’s office. You can eat and take your usual medications the day of your appointment.

It’s helpful to bring these things to your appointment:

- A list of all the medications you’re taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medications,
patches, and creams.

- Results of any tests done outside of MSK, such as a cardiac stress test, echocardiogram, or carotid doppler study.

- The names and telephone numbers of your healthcare providers.

During your PST appointment, you’ll meet with a nurse practitioner (NP). They work closely with anesthesiology staff (specialized healthcare providers who will give you anesthesia during your procedure). Your NP will review your medical and surgical history with you. You may have tests to plan your care. Examples are:

- An electrocardiogram (EKG) to check your heart rhythm.
- A chest X-ray.
- Blood tests.

Your NP may recommend you see other healthcare providers. They’ll also talk with you about which medications to take the morning of your procedure.

**About Drinking Alcohol**

The amount of alcohol you drink can affect you during and after your procedure. It’s important to talk with
your healthcare providers about how much alcohol you drink. This will help us plan your care.

• If you stop drinking alcohol suddenly, it can cause seizures, delirium, and death. If we know you’re at risk for these problems, we can prescribe medications to help keep them from happening.

• If you drink alcohol regularly, you may be at risk for other problems during and after your procedure. These include bleeding, infections, heart problems, and a longer hospital stay.

Here are things you can do before your procedure to keep from having problems:

• Be honest with your healthcare providers about how much alcohol you drink.

• Try to stop drinking alcohol once your procedure is planned. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you:
  ○ Get a headache.
  ○ Feel nauseous (like you’re going to throw up).
  ○ Feel more anxious (nervous or worried) than usual.
  ○ Cannot sleep.

These are early signs of alcohol withdrawal and can
be treated.

- Tell your healthcare provider if you cannot stop drinking.
- Ask your healthcare provider questions about drinking and your procedure. As always, all your medical information will be kept private.

**About smoking**
If you smoke, you can have breathing problems when you have a procedure. Stopping for even a few days before your procedure can help.

Your healthcare provider will refer you to our Tobacco Treatment Program if you smoke. You can also reach the program by calling 212-610-0507.

**About sleep apnea**
Sleep apnea is a common breathing problem. It causes you to stop breathing for short lengths of time while you’re asleep. The most common type is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). With OSA, your airway becomes fully blocked during sleep.

OSA can cause serious problems during and after a procedure. Please tell us if you have or think you might have sleep apnea. If you use a breathing device (such as a CPAP machine), bring it on the day of your procedure.
Arrange for someone to take you home
You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. A responsible care partner is someone who can help you get home safely. They should be able to contact your care team if they have any concerns. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don’t have a responsible care partner to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They’ll send someone to go home with you. There’s a charge for this service, and you’ll need to provide transportation. It’s OK to use a taxi or car service, but you still need a responsible care partner with you.

Agencies in New York
Partners in Care: 888-735-8913
Caring People: 877-227-4649

Agencies in New Jersey
Caring People: 877-227-4649

We recommend you have someone to help at home for the first 24 hours after your procedure.

Complete a Health Care Proxy form

If you have not already filled out a Health Care Proxy form, we recommend you do now. If you already filled
one out or have any other advance directives, bring them to your next appointment.

A health care proxy is a legal document. It says who will speak for you if you cannot communicate for yourself. This person is called your health care agent.

• For information about health care proxies and other advance directives, read *Advance Care Planning* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/advance_care_planning](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/advance_care_planning)).

• For information about being a health care agent, read *How to Be a Health Care Agent* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/health_care_agent](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/health_care_agent)).

• If you have more questions about filling out a Health Care Proxy form, talk with your healthcare provider.

**Exercise**

Exercising will help your body get into its best condition for your procedure and make your recovery faster and easier.

Try to do aerobic exercise every day. Aerobic exercise is any exercise that makes your heart beat faster, such as walking, swimming, or biking. If it’s cold outside, use stairs in your home or go to a mall or shopping center.
Follow a healthy diet
Follow a well-balanced, healthy diet before your procedure. If you need help with your diet, talk with your healthcare provider about meeting with a clinical dietitian nutritionist.

Buy your supplies
Buy the bowel preparation kit your healthcare provider told you to use if you haven’t already done so.

- Bisacodyl (Dulcolax®) 5 milligram (mg) tablets. These are usually sold as a box of 10 tablets, but you’ll only need to take 1 tablet.
- NuLYTELY® solution and flavor packs (cherry, lemon-lime, orange, and pineapple). This comes in a 1-gallon (128-ounce) bottle, but you’ll only need to drink ½ gallon (64 ounces). Your healthcare provider will give you a prescription for this.

This is also a good time to stock up on clear liquids to drink the day before your procedure. Read the table in the “Follow a clear liquid diet” section for examples of liquids to buy.

7 Days Before Your Procedure
Follow your healthcare provider’s instructions for taking aspirin

If you take aspirin or a medication that contains aspirin, you may need to change your dose or stop taking it 7 days before your procedure. Aspirin can cause bleeding.

Follow your healthcare provider’s instructions. **Do not stop taking aspirin unless they tell you to.**

For more information, read *Common Medications Containing Aspirin, Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), or Vitamin E* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds](www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds)).

Stop taking vitamin E, multivitamins, herbal remedies, and other dietary supplements

Stop taking vitamin E, multivitamins, herbal remedies, and other dietary supplements 7 days before your procedure. These things can cause bleeding.

If your healthcare provider gives you other instructions, follow those instead.

For more information, read *Herbal Remedies and Cancer Treatment* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/herbal_remedies](www.mskcc.org/pe/herbal_remedies)).
2 Days Before Your Procedure

Stop taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

Stop taking NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen (Advil® and Motrin®) and naproxen (Aleve®), 2 days before your procedure. NSAIDs can cause bleeding.

If your healthcare provider gives you other instructions, follow those instead.

For more information, read Common Medications Containing Aspirin, Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), or Vitamin E (www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds).

1 Day Before Your Procedure

Note the time of your procedure

A staff member from the Admitting Office will call you after 2 p.m. the day before your procedure. If your procedure is scheduled for a Monday, they’ll call you on the Friday before. If you do not get a call by 7 p.m., call 212-639-5014.

The staff member will tell you what time to arrive at the hospital for your procedure. They’ll also remind you where to go.

This will be:
If you have any changes in your health or need to cancel your procedure for any reason, call your radiation oncologist.

**Prepare your NuLYTELY bowel preparation solution**

On the morning of the day before your procedure, add lukewarm water to the NuLYTELY, filling it to the top of the line on the bottle. Add a flavor pack, if you choose. Use only a flavor pack that was provided with your NuLYTELY.

With the cap on, shake the NuLYTELY bottle until the powder is dissolved. The mixture will be clear, even if you used a flavor pack. If you prefer, you can place the bottle in the refrigerator to chill it. Many people have told us that NuLYTELY tastes better cold. Don’t mix the NuLYTELY earlier than the morning before your procedure.
Take a bisacodyl tablet
At 1 p.m. on the day before your procedure, swallow 1 bisacodyl tablet with water.

Follow a clear liquid diet

- You can have solid food for breakfast and lunch. Aim to finish your lunch by 2 p.m.
- After lunch, start the clear liquid diet.
  - A clear liquid diet includes only liquids you can see through. Examples are listed in the “Clear Liquid Diet” table.
  - Try to drink at least 1 (8-ounce) cup of clear liquid every hour while you’re awake.
  - Drink different types of clear liquids. Don’t just drink water, coffee, and tea.
  - Don’t drink more than 2 cups (16 ounces) of liquids with caffeine.
  - Don’t drink diet liquids, even if you have diabetes. If you do, you may feel weak or dizzy.

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<th>Clear Liquid Diet</th>
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<td>• Gelatin, such as Jell-O®.</td>
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**Drink the NyLYTELY bowel preparation**

At **3 p.m. on the day before your procedure**, start drinking the NuLYTELY. Drink 1 (8-ounce) cup of the mixture every 15 minutes. **Drink only half of the NuLYTELY solution (64 ounces). Throw out the other half.** Then, keep drinking clear liquids.

The NuLYTELY will cause frequent bowel movements, so be sure to be near a bathroom when you start drinking it. To help prevent irritation, you can apply petroleum
jelly (Vaseline®) or A&D® ointment to the skin around your anus after every bowel movement.

The Night Before Your Procedure

- Take the medications your healthcare provider told you to take the night before your procedure. Take them with a small sip of water.
- Shower using soap and water the night before or the morning of your procedure.

Instructions for Eating Before Your Procedure

Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your procedure. This includes hard candy and gum.

The Day of Your Procedure

Instructions for Drinking Before Your Procedure

You can drink a total of 12 ounces of water between midnight and 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time. Do not drink anything else.

Do not drink anything starting 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time. This includes water.
Things to remember

- Take the medications your healthcare provider told you to take the morning of your procedure. Take them with a small sip of water.
- Don’t put on any lotion, cream, deodorant, powder, or cologne.
- Don’t wear any metal objects. Remove all jewelry, including body piercings. The equipment used during your procedure can cause burns if it touches metal.
- Leave valuable items (such as credit cards, jewelry, and your checkbook) at home.
- If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead. If you don’t have glasses, bring a case for your contacts.

What to bring

- A pair of loose-fitting pants, such as sweatpants.
- Brief-style underwear that’s 1 to 2 sizes larger than you normally wear.
- Sneakers that lace up. You may have some swelling in your feet, and lace-up sneakers can accommodate this swelling.
Where to park
MSK’s parking garage is on East 66th Street between York and 1st avenues. If you have questions about prices, call 212-639-2338.

To reach the garage, turn onto East 66th Street from York Avenue. The garage is about a quarter of a block in from York Avenue. It’s on the right (north) side of the street. There’s a tunnel you can walk through that connects the garage to the hospital.

There are other parking garages located on:

- East 69th Street between 1st and 2nd avenues.
- East 67th Street between York and 1st avenues.
- East 65th Street between 1st and 2nd avenues.

Once you’re in the hospital
When you get to the hospital, take the B elevator to the 6th floor. Check in at the desk in the PSC waiting room.

Many staff members will ask you to say and spell your name and birth date. This is for your safety. People with the same or a similar name may be having a procedure on the same day.

When it’s time to change for your procedure, you’ll get a hospital gown, robe, and nonskid socks to wear.
Meet with a nurse
You’ll meet with a nurse before your procedure. Tell them the dose of any medications you took after midnight and the time you took them. Make sure to include prescription and over-the-counter medications, patches, and creams.

Your nurse may place an intravenous (IV) line in one of your veins, usually in your arm or hand. If your nurse does not place the IV, your anesthesiologist will do it in the procedure room.

During your procedure
When it’s time for your procedure, you’ll either walk into the operating room or be taken in on a stretcher. A member of the operating room team will help you onto the operating bed. Compression boots will be placed on your lower legs. These gently inflate and deflate to help blood flow in your legs.

Once you’re comfortable, your anesthesiologist will give
you anesthesia through your IV line and you’ll fall asleep. You’ll also get fluids through your IV line during and after your procedure.

After you’re fully asleep, a breathing tube will be placed through your mouth and into your windpipe to help you breathe. A urinary (Foley) catheter will also be placed to drain urine from your bladder.

After the Foley catheter is in place, your healthcare provider will use a rectal ultrasound to see your prostate. They’ll put 12 to 22 tiny needles into your prostate through your perineum (the area of skin between your scrotum and anus). The needles are guided to the exact locations in and around your prostate through a square plastic template. The template will be positioned up against your perineum (see Figure 2).

**During your treatment**

When all the needles are inserted, you’ll have a computed tomography (CT) scan or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan to make sure the needles are in the right place. These scans will also help your healthcare provider finish the treatment planning process.

After your treatment plan is confirmed, you’ll probably have your first treatment while you’re still asleep in the
operating room. For your treatment, tubes will be connected to the needles in your prostate to deliver the radiation (see section “Getting your second HDR treatment”). The tubes look like long, plastic straws (see Figure 2). The cables are connected to a machine that stores the radioactive source (Iridium-192).

After the right amount of radiation is delivered to your prostate, the tubes will be disconnected and the treatment will end. If you’re getting a second treatment, refer to the section “Getting your second HDR treatment.”

The needles will be removed from your prostate after the treatment is finished. Your nurse will apply pressure to your perineum to help with any bleeding. The Foley catheter and breathing tube will be removed.

**After Your Procedure**

**In the hospital**

You’ll wake up in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). A nurse will be keeping track of your temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and oxygen levels.

In rare cases, you may still have a Foley catheter in your bladder to keep track of how much urine you’re making. You may also still have compression boots on your lower
legs.

You may have some pain after your procedure. Your healthcare providers will ask you about your pain often. You’ll be given medication to treat your pain as needed. If your pain isn’t relieved, please tell one of your healthcare providers.

If you still have needles in place, you must stay in bed. You’ll be lying on your back with your legs straight or on a ramp. You can’t move your hips or legs, but you can wiggle your toes. You can move your arms and upper body. Once your needles are removed, you’ll be allowed to get out of your bed with help.

There isn’t anything radioactive in your needles between your treatments.

**Getting your second HDR treatment**

If you need 2 HDR treatments, the second treatment will be done about 4 to 6 hours after your first treatment. You’ll be moved from the PACU to the treatment area in the Department of Radiation Oncology for the treatment. You’ll be able to give yourself pain medication by using a patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) device.

For your second treatment, your radiation therapist will attach the needles coming out of your perineum to
tubes. Once everything is set, your radiation therapist will leave the room while you get the HDR treatment. The room has a video camera and an intercom so your radiation therapists can see and hear you at all times. The Iridium-192 radiation source will move through the tubes into your needles. You won’t see or feel the radiation while it’s in your prostate. You may hear a clicking sound from the HDR machine.

Your treatment will take about 10 to 20 minutes.

After your treatment is done, the Iridium-192 radiation source is moved back into the machine. Your radiation therapist will come back and disconnect the cables.

After your last treatment, the template, needles, and Foley catheter will be removed. After your catheter is removed, you’ll need to urinate on your own before you can go home. Most people go home on the same day as their procedure and treatment(s).

After your treatment is finished, you aren’t radioactive and don’t need to follow any radiation precautions.

**At home**
Medications

- Radiation to the prostate often causes urinary frequency and urgency (feeling that you need to urinate more often or very suddenly). To manage these side effects, keep taking all urinary medications as prescribed, such as tamsulosin (Flomax®), silodosin (Rapaflo®), or alfuzosin (Uroxatral®). Tell your healthcare provider if you don’t have these medications at home.

- After your procedure, you may feel burning when you urinate. This is from the Foley catheter that was placed in your bladder. You’ll get a prescription for medication to help with the burning called phenazopyridine (Pyridium®).

Other instructions

- Rarely, you may have some bleeding in your perineum where the needles entered. If this happens, apply steady pressure with a clean, dry washcloth or gauze for 5 minutes. If the bleeding becomes heavy or doesn’t stop, call your healthcare provider.

- You can resume your regular diet. You may want to avoid things that may irritate your bladder. These include caffeine (such as coffee and tea), alcohol, citrus juices, and spicy foods.
• You can shower after you’re discharged from the hospital.

• Don’t lift anything over 20 pounds (9.1 kilograms) for at least 1 week after your procedure.

• Most people can go back to work 2 days after their procedure. If your job requires heavy lifting, ask your healthcare provider when you can go back to work.

Side Effects

Urinary symptoms

Urinary symptoms are the most common side effects of brachytherapy. After your procedure, you may have some of the following symptoms.

• Some people can’t urinate after the procedure or may only be able to urinate a few drops at a time. This is an emergency. Call your healthcare provider right away if you can’t urinate.

• You may need to urinate more often than usual, as many as 1 or more times an hour. This usually starts 2 to 4 weeks after your procedure and can last several months or longer.

• You may have some burning during urination. This usually starts 2 to 4 weeks after your procedure and can last for about 4 to 12 months.
• You may notice blood in your urine, which will make it look pink. This is common and usually disappears 3 to 7 days after your procedure. Call your healthcare provider if bleeding continues after 7 days or if you pass blood clots in your urine.

• You may have bruising and or swelling around your scrotum, testicles, and penis. This should go away 1 to 2 weeks after your procedure. Call your healthcare provider if you still have bruising after 2 weeks.

Talk with your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms. If you have a procedure to look at your bladder (such as a cystoscopy) planned, wait to have it until after you’ve talked with your healthcare provider.

**Pain**
You may have some mild pain for 1 or 2 days after your procedure. You can take an over-the-counter pain medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®), or naproxen (Aleve®) to help with pain. If these doesn’t help your pain, call your healthcare provider.

**Sexual health**
You may have concerns about the effects of cancer and your treatment on your sexuality. After your treatment, you aren’t radioactive. You can’t pass radiation to anyone else, so it’s safe to be in close contact with other
You can be sexually active after your HDR brachytherapy treatment unless your radiation oncologist gives you other instructions. However, if you’re sexually active with a woman who can have children, you must use birth control (contraception) to prevent pregnancy during your entire prostate cancer treatment. You must keep using birth control for 1 year after your treatment is finished. This is to make sure you don’t conceive with sperm that may have been damaged by exposure to radiation, which could possibly result in birth defects.

You may have temporary or permanent numbness in the head of your penis, although this is rare.

You may also develop sexual changes after your treatment. You may have:

- Erectile dysfunction (difficultly or inability to have or maintain an erection).
- A change in the sensation of orgasm.
- A change in the amount or consistency of your ejaculation.

These sexual changes may occur many months or even years after treatment.
There are treatments for erectile dysfunction. MSK has a Male Sexual and Reproductive Medicine Program to help people address the impact of their disease and treatment on their sexual health. You can meet with a specialist before, during, or after your treatment. Your healthcare provider can give you a referral, or you can call 646-888-6024 for an appointment.

An excellent resource that discusses sexual health issues during treatment is the booklet *Sex and the Man With Cancer*. You can get a copy of this booklet from the American Cancer Society by calling 800-227-2345 or by searching for it at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

**Support Services**

**MSK Support Services**
Visit the Cancer Types section of MSK’s website at [www.mskcc.org/types](http://www.mskcc.org/types) for more information.

**Admitting Office**
212-639-7606
Call if you have questions about your hospital admission, such as asking for a private room.

**Anesthesia**
212-639-6840
Call if you have questions about anesthesia.
Blood Donor Room
212-639-7643
Call for information if you’re interested in donating blood or platelets.

Bobst International Center
888-675-7722
We welcome patients from around the world and offer many services to help. If you’re an international patient, call for help arranging your care.

Counseling Center
646-888-0200
Many people find that counseling helps them. Our counseling center offers counseling for individuals, couples, families, and groups. We can also prescribe medications to help if you feel anxious or depressed. To make an appointment, ask your healthcare provider for a referral or call the number above.

Female Sexual Medicine & Women’s Health Program
646-888-5076
Cancer and cancer treatments can affect your sexual health, fertility, or both. Our Female Sexual Medicine & Women’s Health Program can help with sexual health problems, such as premature menopause or fertility
issues. We can help before, during, or after your treatment. Call for more information or to make an appointment.

**Food Pantry Program**
646-888-8055
We give food to people in need during their cancer treatment. For more information, talk with your healthcare provider or call the number above.

**Integrative Medicine Service**
[www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine](http://www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine)
Our Integrative Medicine Service offers many services to complement (go along with) traditional medical care, including music therapy, mind/body therapies, dance and movement therapy, yoga, and touch therapy. To schedule an appointment for these services, call 646-449-1010.

You can also schedule a consultation with a healthcare provider in the Integrative Medicine Service. They will work with you to come up with a plan for creating a healthy lifestyle and managing side effects. To make an appointment, call 646-608-8550.

**Male Sexual and Reproductive Medicine Program**
646-888-6024
Cancer and cancer treatments can affect your sexual
health, fertility, or both. Our Male Sexual and Reproductive Medicine Program can help with sexual health problems, such as erectile dysfunction (ED). We can help before, during, or after your treatment. Call for more information or to make an appointment.

**MSK Library**

library.mskcc.org
212-639-7439

You can visit our library website or call to talk with the library reference staff. They can help you find more information about a type of cancer. You can also visit LibGuides on MSK’s library website at libguides.mskcc.org

**Nutrition Services**

www.mskcc.org/nutrition
212-639-7312

Our Nutrition Service offers nutritional counseling with one of our clinical dietitian nutritionists. Your clinical dietitian nutritionist will talk with you about your eating habits. They can also give advice on what to eat during and after treatment. To make an appointment, ask a member of your care team for a referral or call the number above.

**Patient and Caregiver Education**
www.mskcc.org/pe
Visit our Patient and Caregiver Education website to search for educational resources, videos, and online programs.

**Patient and Caregiver Peer Support Program**
212-639-5007
It can be comforting to talk with someone who has been through a treatment like yours. You can talk with a former MSK patient or caregiver through our **Patient and Caregiver Peer Support Program**. Your conversations are private. They can be in person or over the phone.

**Patient Billing**
646-227-3378
Call if you have questions about preauthorization with your insurance company. This is also called preapproval.

**Patient Representative Office**
212-639-7202
Call if you have questions about the Health Care Proxy form or concerns about your care.

**Perioperative Nurse Liaison**
212-639-5935
Call if you have questions about MSK releasing any information while you’re having surgery.
Private Duty Nurses and Companions
917-862-6373
You can request private nurses or companions to care for you in the hospital and at home. Call for more information.

Resources for Life After Cancer (RLAC) Program
646-888-8106
At MSK, care does not end after your treatment. The RLAC Program is for patients and their families who have finished treatment.

This program has many services. We offer seminars, workshops, support groups, and counseling on life after treatment. We can also help with insurance and employment issues.

Social Work
www.mskcc.org/socialwork
212-639-7020
Social workers help patients, families, and friends deal with common issues for people who have cancer. They provide individual counseling and support groups throughout your treatment. They can help you communicate with children and other family members.

Our social workers can also help refer you to community agencies and programs. They also have information
about as financial resources, if you’re having trouble paying your bills.

**Spiritual Care**
212-639-5982

Our chaplains (spiritual counselors) are available to listen, help support family members, and pray. They can contact community clergy or faith groups, or simply be a comforting companion and a spiritual presence. Anyone can ask for *spiritual support*. You do not have to have a religious affiliation (connection to a religion).

MSK’s interfaith chapel is located near Memorial Hospital’s main lobby. It’s open 24 hours a day. If you have an emergency, call 212-639-2000. Ask for the chaplain on call.

**Tobacco Treatment Program**
[www.mskcc.org/tobacco](http://www.mskcc.org/tobacco)
212-610-0507

If you want to quit smoking, the specialists in our Tobacco Treatment Program can help. Call for information.

**Virtual Programs**
[www.mskcc.org/vp](http://www.mskcc.org/vp)

Our Virtual Programs offer online education and support
for patients and caregivers. These are live sessions where you can talk or just listen. You can learn about your diagnosis, what to expect during treatment, and how to prepare for your cancer care.

Sessions are private, free, and led by experts. Visit our website for more information about Virtual Programs or to register.

**External support services**

**American Cancer Society**

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

800-227-2345

Provides information and support to people with cancer and their caregivers.

**American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology**

[www.rtanswers.org](http://www.rtanswers.org)

800-962-7876

Group of radiation oncology professionals that specializes in treating people with radiation therapy. Provides information on treating cancer with radiation and contact information for radiation oncologist in your area.

**CancerCare**

[www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)
800-813-HOPE (800-813-4673)
Provides counseling, education, information, referrals, and direct financial assistance to people with cancer and their caregivers.

**Cancer Support Community**
cancersupportcommunity.org
Provides support and education to people affected by cancer.

**National Cancer Institute**
www.cancer.gov
800-4-CANCER (800-422-6237)
Provides education and support to people with cancer and their families.

**ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer**
www.zerocancer.org

**Prostate Cancer Foundation**
www.pcf.org

**US Too International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network**
www.ustoo.org
When to Call Your Healthcare Provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have:

- New or worsening urinary symptoms.
- Difficulty urinating.
- Blood clots in your urine.
- A fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or higher.
- Pain that doesn’t get better after taking pain medication.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your radiation therapy team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the numbers listed below.
After 5 p.m., during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000. Ask for the radiation oncologist on call.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.