



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO HOSPITAL

Information for Patients and their Families

RADIATION ONCOLOGY

TANDEM AND OVOID (T&O), HOMECARE INSTRUCTIONS

T & O stands for tandem and ovoids. It is a procedure done in the operating room with conscious sedation (medications to make you sleepy and relaxed). Applicators are inserted into the vagina so that high dose radiation can be delivered directly to the cervix and surrounding tissues. These applicators are temporary and will be removed the same day after you receive the radiation treatment. Treatment usually includes 4 to 5 insertions (internal treatments). This means you will go 4 to 5 times to the operating room (OR) to have the applicators placed so radiation can be delivered. You will receive 1 to 2 internal treatments each week over 2 to 4 weeks.

Please follow these directions after your T&O treatment:

Activity

- Rest on the day of surgery. It is not unusual to feel sleepy. Do not drive on the day of surgery.
- Resume normal activity on the day following each procedure.
- You may resume sexual activity two weeks after completing your last T&O providing you experience no discomfort.

Diet

- Begin with clear liquids and progress back to your normal diet if you are not nauseated.
- If you are nauseated, remain on clear liquids until the nausea passes.

Medications

- After you are no longer nauseated, resume taking your medications.

Personal Hygiene

- The day following each procedure, take a shower instead of a bath to limit the risk of infection.
- Use sanitary pads (not tampons) for vaginal spotting.

Radiation Treatment

Your T & O procedures are scheduled for the following dates:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

(OVER)

When to Call

If you experience any of the following symptoms contact the clinic:

- Unusual or heavy vaginal bleeding
- Fever or chills
- Excessive pelvic or abdominal pain
- Continuing nausea or vomiting after 24 hours
- Any unusual symptoms

For questions or concerns please call the clinic at 720-848-0167, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For emergencies:

If after hours, call 720-848-0100 and have the operator page the doctor on call. The doctor will call you back. If unable to reach your health care provider call the **Emergency Department at 303-372-8911.**



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LEARNING ABOUT THE VAGINAL DILATOR

What is a vaginal dilator?

It is a smooth, plastic tube about 5 to 6 inches long. It comes in several sizes: small, medium, and large.

Why do I need to use a vaginal dilator?

Radiation therapy can cause scar tissue to form in your vagina. This scar tissue can cause your vagina to close and become less elastic, dry, and tender. Using a dilator or having regular sexual intercourse may prevent scar tissue. These activities help keep the vagina open and the tissue soft. This also will allow for a more thorough and comfortable pelvic exam in follow-up.

When do I start using the dilator?

You should begin using your dilator two weeks after completing all your radiation treatments.

How often do I use my dilator?

Use your dilator daily unless you have sexual intercourse.

How do I use my dilator?

- Wash your dilator in hot, soapy water, and rinse it thoroughly.
- Lubricate the dilator with K-Y Jelly[®] or any water-based lubricant. You can also use this lubricant for intercourse. Do not use Vaseline[®] or baby oil. These products can irritate the vagina.
- Lie on your back, bend both knees, and spread your legs apart. You may also try any other position that is easier or more comfortable for you.
- Separate the outer folds of skin around the vaginal opening with two fingers of one hand. With the other hand, gently insert the rounded end of your dilator in to your vagina as far as you can.
- Hold the dilator in place for 10 minutes before removing it.
- Wash your dilator in hot, soapy water. Rinse it well. Store it in a clean, dry place.

When to Contact Us

Call 720-848-0167 if you have any of the following problems:

- You have problems with the dilator
- You have bleeding or severe pain when using the dilator or with sexual intercourse
- You have pain or increased frequency with urination
- You develop symptoms of a vaginal infection, such as:
 - Vaginal discharge with or without a strong odor
 - Abdominal pain
 - Fever