



Memorial Healthcare Offers New Breast Cancer Radiation Treatment

Radiation Therapy: 5 days versus 7 weeks

Memorial Healthcare and its expert team of cancer surgeons and radiation oncologists are using the latest in radiation seed implant technology to significantly reduce a woman's radiation course from six or seven weeks to just five days for those women who undergo certain types of lumpectomy surgery.

The first Brachytherapy breast seed implant was performed at Memorial Healthcare in early November by **Nathan Tomita, D.O., M.P.H.**, one of only two surgeons in mid-Michigan who had adopted this highly-advanced technology. The surgery was performed on a Corunna resident diagnosed with Stage 1 breast cancer. According to Dr. Tomita, "It's exciting to bring new techniques such as breast Brachytherapy to Shiawassee County which means I can offer multiple surgical options and more than just one radiation treatment option."

Radiation therapy is given to most patients who have a lumpectomy for breast cancer in order to kill cancer cells or prevent them from reproducing or spreading, thereby reducing the risk of recurrence. Whole breast irradiation uses a radiation source outside the body to treat the cancer site, typically involving daily treatments for five days each week over a period of six to seven weeks. The Contura™ Multi-Lumen Balloon Brachytherapy implant is small enough to be implanted into a woman's breast to treat the "rind" of tissue surrounding the cavity left by lumpectomy surgery. With breast Brachytherapy, the saline-filled balloon (implant) remains in the breast for a five-day period. The seeds are inserted for just a few minutes during each visit over the

course of treatment, depending on an individual's course of care, and are then removed until the next treatment. Because the balloon is placed inside the lumpectomy cavity, only the tissue closest to the balloon is affected by radiation. The entire breast is not exposed to high doses of radiation, as is the case with whole breast irradiation.



Dr. Nathan Tomita holds the Contura™ Multi-Lumen Balloon Brachytherapy implant, a saline-filled balloon into which radiation seeds are inserted in up to five separate channels. This allows radiation to be contoured to reach the targeted area.

"The radiation dose is directed by the seed sits in the balloon, allowing to concentrate the radiation dose on the tumor area," explains Dr. Tomita. "If the seed was too close to the skin in channel one, we might place the seed in channel three or four for a longer time than channel one."

Patients who experience the greatest success with the treatment usually have early stage breast cancer with low multicentric disease — cancer that develops in different quadrants of the breast simultaneously — and local ductal carcinomas. Most potential candidates also have small tumors, measuring less than 3 cm, tumors with negative margins surrounding them and unaffected or minimally affected lymph nodes.

Dr. Tomita is a general and bariatric surgeon on staff at Memorial Healthcare in Owosso. To schedule a consultation with Dr. Tomita, contact (989) 723-3168.

For a tour of Memorial's accredited Cancer Center, located inside the new Memorial Healthcare Medical Arts Building, contact (989) 729-4780.