

METASTRON THERAPY

Patient Information on radiation safety

WHAT IS METASTRON?

Metastron is a radioactive form of strontium (strontium-89) which is given for the palliative treatment of pain associated with metastatic bone disease. Strontium-89 is chemically similar to calcium and concentrates in the diseased areas of the skeleton. Strontium-89 emits beta rays, which travel about a millimetre in bone.

ARE THERE ANY RADIATION-SIDE EFFECTS FROM THIS PROCEDURE?

Any radiation treatment procedure carries some risk. Your doctor recommends this procedure since the risks are thought to be outweighed by the treatment benefits. Metastron has been proved to be effective in pain palliation without causing severe side effects. You may experience a small increase in bone pains for a short period in the first few days after treatment.

Pregnancy: This medication is not recommended to be used during pregnancy.

Breast Feeding: Strontium chloride may pass into the breast milk. This medication is not recommended to be used during lactation. If you are breast-feeding an infant, be sure you have discussed this with your doctor because it will be necessary to cease breast-feeding.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS FOR OTHERS?

Since the radiation from strontium-89 lodged in bone and is confined to the painful area, the patient does not pose any radiation hazard.

However during the first two days after the administration of strontium-89, a significant amount of strontium-89 will be excreted, mainly through the urine. It is necessary that the patient should adopt a high level of personal hygiene to prevent any contamination from radioactive urine. Due to the presence of high activity in the urine in the first two days after the treatment, it is advisable for the patient to use a separate toilet to the one used by others, especially young children, to avoid any possible contamination.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE TREATMENT DAY?

On the treatment day, you will be presented to the Department of Nuclear Medicine, Liverpool Hospital. The physician will explain the procedure to you. A needle or thin tube will be inserted in one of your veins and the doctor injects the strontium-89 pharmaceutical and flushes the line with saline.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE INCONTINENT?

Following the treatment your urine will be radioactive for the first two days. If you are likely to have an incontinence episode, the doctor will advise you about precautions to avoid contamination. The doctor may prefer you to be hospitalised at least for the first two days after the administration of the radiopharmaceutical.

DO YOU NEED TO STAY IN THE HOSPITAL?

Usually after the administration you will be discharged immediately. It is imperative that you should follow the following procedure

- The toilet should be flushed twice after use.
- Any spilled urine should be wiped off with a tissue and flushed away.
- Ensure that hands are always washed after using the toilet.
- Immediately wash linen or clothes which become stained with blood or urine. These should be washed separately from other clothes and rinsed thoroughly.