

CHEMOEMBOLIZATION:

CANCER TREATMENT WITHOUT SURGERY

What is Chemoembolization?

Chemoembolization is a method to treat cancers in the liver. Chemotherapy filled beads are selectively placed into the tumor through a catheter under x-ray. Beads release chemotherapy over two weeks as well as decrease the blood supply to the cancer which helps kill the tumor.

When is Chemoembolization performed?

Chemoembolization is used to treat cancers that are largely confined to the liver whether the tumor began in the liver or spread to the liver from another organ.

This includes include:

- Hepatocellular Carcinoma/Hepatoma/primary liver cancer
- colon cancer
- breast cancer
- carcinoid tumors and other neuroendocrine tumors
- islet cell tumors of the pancreas
- other vascular primary tumors in the body

Depending on the number and type of tumors, chemoembolization may be used as the sole treatment or may be combined with other treatment options.

How should I prepare for chemoembolization?

Several days before the procedure, you will have an office consultation with the interventional radiology physician who will be performing your procedure. You will receive specific instructions on how to prepare, including any changes that need to be made to your regular medication schedule

During the procedure you will be given intravenous sedation so you are more comfortable so you may not to eat or drink six hours before your procedure. You will stay overnight in the hospital and will need someone to drive you home the next day.

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How is the procedure performed?

Image-guided, minimally invasive procedures such as chemoembolization are performed by interventional radiology physicians. A thin flexible tube called a catheter is placed into the artery at your groin. The catheter will be directed under X-ray into the blood vessel that feeds the liver tumor.

What will I experience after the procedure?

Most patients feel a dull pain in the right upper abdomen for a few days after the procedure. It will be controlled in the hospital with IV pain medications. Once home you may still need medications by mouth. Some patients may experience post-embolization syndrome, which includes pain, nausea, vomiting and fever.

What medications will I need when I get home from the procedure? You will be sent home with prescriptions for oral antibiotics, pain medicine and medicine for nausea. It is normal for you to run a low grade (<101.5 F) fever up to a week following the procedure. Fatigue and loss of appetite are also common and may last two weeks or longer. You should be able to resume your normal activities within a week.

How will I know if the procedure is effective? You will return for a CT scan or MRI and blood tests to determine the shrinkage of the treated tumor. If there is a great deal of tumor this procedure may be part of a staged treatment that takes place over 2-3 months.

What are the benefits vs. risks? In about two-thirds of cases treated, chemoembolization can stop liver tumors from growing or cause them to shrink. This benefit lasts for an average of 10 to 14 months, depending upon the type of tumor, and usually can be repeated if the cancer starts to grow again.