VŠEOBECNÁ FAKULTNÍ NEMOCNICE V PRAZE
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Edukační materiál

GUIDELINES FOR PATIENTS AFTER SAMARIUM ^{153}Sm ADMINISTRATION

What is Samarium?

Samarium is an injection drug developed to relieve bone pain in your illness. Chemically, Samarium is similar to calcium. It is deposited in all places where bones accept new calcium, so at the sore spots too. There Samarium remains for several weeks and reduces the pain. For many years, physicians have been using some types of radiation to reduce pain that patients like you suffer from. The syringe contains a small amount radioactive Samarium in a form that was specially chosen so that nearly all the radiation can be released at those sites where Samarium is bound. This enables us to locate the therapy exactly where it is needed.

Why was I given Samarium?

For many people, application of Samarium is much more acceptable than other ways of therapy. You were prescribed Samarium because physicians are convinced this will be the best option of treatment for you.

What is the procedure after the injection of Samarium?

If you are an outpatient, you will either stay in bed at the premises of the clinic at the Institute of Nuclear Medicine, or be discharged for home rest immediately. If you are an inpatient, you will be transferred back to your ward in some time after the drug application.

What effect will Samarium have?

Within one to three days following the administration of the drug your pain may worsen for a short time. This is common, and after consultation with the attending doctor the doses of pain-killers can be increased. In about one week following the application you will feel relief of pain, which may last for up to several months. The application of Samarium can be repeated as needed.

Are there any side-effects?

After the application of Samarium you can eat and drink normally. In some patients, a decrease in the number of white blood cells and blood platelets can occur. This is completely normal. For this reason, your doctor will invite you for routine blood tests until your levels get back to normal.

Shall I stop taking pain-killers?

Your doctor may recommend you to continue taking the pain-killers until the pain starts to go away. Then he/she can recommend that you gradually reduce the doses. Then you can carry on lowering the doses further, and you may well need no pain-killers at all. If you are in any doubt, address your attending doctor.

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What will the further treatment be?

Your doctor will advise you on further treatment if you need any. You may have been given injections or tablets, and it is possible that your doctor will continue this kind of treatment.

What activities can I do?

The injection does not prevent you from doing anything that you have been doing so far. Once you start to feel the effect of Samarium and your pain is relieved, you will realize that you are able to go in for such activities that you found difficult or exhausting before. Usually this is not a problem but be careful in case you overtax yourself. When in any doubt, ask your doctor for advice. Samarium what not affect your ability do drive vehicles or to operate machinery.

Who shall I tell about it?

You should tell anyone who prescribes you any kind of treatment that you have had an injection of Samarium.

What measures shall I take?

The effect of Samarium in the body is limited to the sore areas where the substance concentrates. That part of Samarium that is not deposited at the sore spots passes into your blood and urine. Therefore, it is necessary to consistently observe the following measures during the first few days following the application:

- wherever an ordinary toilet seat is available, prefer it over the urinal. Always flush the toilet twice. Dry any areas stained with urine with paper, using rubber gloves, and flush the paper. Wash your hands thoroughly after every use of toilet.
- if your underwear is wetted, wash it immediately. Wash it separately from the other laundry and rinse it well.
- in case of injury, wash all the blood away thoroughly
- do not stay near other people unnecessarily, in particular, near children and pregnant women. (If you are in hospital, the attending staff will be instructed.)

What will happen if the pain comes back?

If the pain comes back, you should address your doctor who can prescribe you another injection of Samarium.

For 3 days, handle any wetted nappies in disposable gloves. Put the nappies and gloves in a polythene bag and leave them at a secluded place such as a garage, balcony etc. After 3 weeks you can dump them in the dustbin or burn them.