



spotlight on men's health

Making Cancer A Word, Not A Sentence

(NAPSA)—For men, the diagnosis of prostate cancer is viewed as worse than a sentence of death. Thanks to the famous survivors, including Yankees manager Joe Torre, General “Stormin” Norman Schwarzkopf and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, prostate cancer is out in the open and treatment options are widely discussed.

Nearly 200,000 American men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year, and over 30,000 die from the disease—making it the second-most common cancer killer of U.S. men (after lung cancer). The American Cancer Society recommends that men get their PSA levels checked annually starting at age 50, with African-American men (who are twice as likely to die from the disease) beginning testing at 45.

For decades, surgery to remove the prostate gland was the only treatment available. Today, doctors have other therapies with proven results. One such treatment is brachytherapy, or “seeding,” and it is increasingly recommended by doctors and requested by prostate cancer patients. One reason is that prostatectomies require one to four hours of surgery, three days of hospitalization, and up to eight weeks for recovery—while seeding is done on an outpatient basis. Another is that radical surgery has a higher incidence of complications, including impotence and incontinence. A third reason is the cure opportunities with seeding versus surgery.

Jerrold Sharkey, M.D., a published surgeon and urologist, studied how more than 1,300 men reacted to treatment involving either radical prostate surgery or brachytherapy, using TheraSeed®, a palladium-based seed device that has been used on more than



Dr. Jerrold Sharkey (right) discusses a new treatment for prostate cancer with a patient.

100,000 men. The research concluded that when it compared low-risk patients, cure rates were nearly identical. However, when comparing the two treatments for patients in the intermediate- and higher-risk categories, brachytherapy provided patients with enormously greater cure opportunities.

What is Brachytherapy

Radioactive seeds the size of a grain of rice are used to deliver a highly concentrated, yet confined, dose of radiation directly to the prostate gland—destroying cancer while minimizing dosage to surrounding healthy tissues. Where surgery might miss microscopic cancer cells, the implanted seed can reach and kill cells that surgery may have left behind.

This prostate cancer treatment is a one-time, minimally invasive procedure. Most men resume normal activities in two to three days. The remaining seeds are undetectable in the body by the patient and require no removal when treatment is completed. Medicare and most major medical carriers now cover the procedure.

You can learn more about prostate cancer and brachytherapy with the TheraSeed® device from the Prostate Cancer Information Center at 1-800-458-4372, or online at www.theraseed.com.