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MultiCare Offers New Five-Day Breast Cancer Treatment *New SAVI™ Applicator used to speed treatment and recovery*

TACOMA, Wash. –MultiCare Regional Cancer Center at Tacoma General Hospital is one of the first facilities in the Pacific Northwest to offer a more individualized five-day course of radiation treatment for early-stage breast cancer.

This sophisticated new radiation treatment with the SAVI™ applicator expands treatment options for most women with early-stage breast cancer. Now the majority of women who qualify for partial breast radiation can be treated with the SAVI applicator.

Partial breast radiation is a short, five-day course of radiation therapy given after a lumpectomy. SAVI delivers a form of partial breast radiation known as breast brachytherapy, which targets the tumor site from inside the breast.

SAVI is the only single-entry device that contours the radiation dose specifically to the patient’s individual anatomy. Its design overcomes the limitations of older brachytherapy techniques, such as balloon brachytherapy.

“I use SAVI for the majority of my patients who are candidates for partial breast radiation,” said breast surgeon Lynne Clark, M.D., the first surgeon in Washington to utilize the device. “We can offer this choice to women who would not otherwise qualify for brachytherapy and better individualize treatment for each patient.”

Breast brachytherapy typically involves two treatments per day for only five days. This approach is much more convenient than traditional, external-beam radiation treatment, which takes six to seven weeks. Breast brachytherapy with SAVI also minimizes radiation exposure of healthy tissue. That reduces the risk of exposing critical structures such as the skin, heart, and lungs to radiation.

“This new device does most everything balloon brachytherapy can do and more. It enables us to provide better treatment to many of our breast-cancer patients,” said Carolyn Rutter, M.D., a radiation oncologist at MultiCare. “SAVI allows us to tailor radiation to the patient’s anatomy. That can potentially reduce side effects that may be associated with radiation therapy.”

Breast brachytherapy is used as part of breast-conservation therapy, which includes lumpectomy – the surgical removal of the cancerous tissue within the breast plus tissue immediately around the tumor – followed by radiation. This approach is an alternative to mastectomy, which removes the breast and is often followed by breast reconstruction.

MORE

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SAVI

MultiCare offers comprehensive breast health services – from education, prevention and screening programs to advanced diagnostics, treatment and support. The system’s breast-imaging capabilities include digital mammography, enabling earlier detection that is the key in fighting the disease. Breast cancer treatments include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy and targeted drug therapy. MultiCare also offers complementary therapies such as nutritional therapy, physical therapy and emotional counseling.

MultiCare Regional Cancer Center is also the exclusive south Sound network affiliate of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance.

For more information, go to www.multicare.org and click on “cancer.”

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MultiCare is a leading-edge, integrated health organization made up of four hospitals, numerous primary care and urgent care clinics, multi-specialty centers, Hospice and Home Health services, and many other services. A not-for-profit organization based in Tacoma, Washington since 1882, MultiCare has grown over the years in response to community needs. Today we are the area's largest provider of health care services, serving patients at 93 locations in Pierce, South King, Kitsap and Thurston counties.