

# PCRI Weekly



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## Temporary Seeds Are Effective for Men in the “Teal” Shade MARK SCHOLZ, M.D.



**R**adioactive seed implantation has, in my view, been one of the best (if not THE best) way to treat men with the type of prostate cancer that’s not very bad, but should probably be treated for the sake of prudence. Men in the “Teal” category (Intermediate-Risk) fit this description.

I like radioactive seeds better than surgery (equivalent cure rates with much lower side effects) and better than IMRT (higher radiation dosage that is confined to the prostate rather than beamed through the bladder, rectum and hips). Even so, my preference for radioactive seeds is a minority viewpoint. Surgeons prefer operating, and radiation therapists are paid more to perform IMRT treatment.

There are two types of radioactive seed implants: permanent and temporary. The difference(s) between these two approaches is a separate article in itself, but suffice to say that since their inception, many experts have insisted that supplemental IMRT is necessary for “Teal” patients, regardless of the type of seed implant being used.

Other than covering for mediocre seed implantation techniques, there was never a good reason to expect suboptimal outcomes with seeds alone. Radiation targeting with seeds is very accurate, and the dosage of radiation that can be safely administered is higher than with IMRT. Fortunately, more and more studies are reporting good results using seeds alone.

One such study was published this month in the *Journal of Urology*. A group from Salt Lake City treated 284 men in the Teal category with temporary seeds alone. The three-year PSA relapse-free survival was 95%. As has been consistently reported in other studies, side effects were less than surgery and comparable to IMRT: Impotence occurred in 20%, mild incontinence in 2.5% and mild rectal bleeding in 5%.

**The Bottom Line:** Temporary seed implantation without supplemental IMRT administered at a center of excellence gives excellent cure rates. Side effects appear comparable to other forms of modern radiation.

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