Focal Therapy For Prostate Cancer

Men with early stage prostate cancer who previously had to choose between aggressive treatment -- with a greater risk for side effects -- and active surveillance, have a new treatment option; MRI-guided focal laser ablation. University of Chicago Medicine cancer experts helped pioneer this minimally invasive, outpatient treatment and have completed two clinical trials to study its safety and effectiveness.

What is MRI-guided focal laser ablation therapy?
Focal laser ablation uses highly targeted heat to eradicate cancerous tumor(s) within the prostate. During an MRI-guided focal laser ablation treatment, the patient is given intravenous (IV) sedation while lying in an MRI machine. After injecting a local anesthetic, physicians insert a small catheter to deliver a tiny optical fiber, the laser and a cooling device into the prostate. Under real-time MRI guidance, the laser is positioned within the tumor and used to heat the area to a temperature that kills cancer cells. The physicians monitor the temperature within and around the treatment region to protect healthy tissue, especially areas near critical structures such as the urethra, erectile function nerves, and the rectal wall.

Who is a candidate?
You may be a candidate if you meet the following criteria:
• Diagnosed with prostate cancer with a Gleason score of 6 or 7
• Have no evidence that cancer has spread to other parts of the body
• Able to undergo treatment in an MRI. This includes having no presence of a metal medical device such as a pacemaker or surgical clips in the body or conditions including kidney disease that may prevent use of contrast dye during the procedure.
• Evidence of cancer on MRI that corresponds with the biopsy findings

Learn more at: http://www.uchospitals.edu/specialties/cancer/urologic/prostate/treatment/focal-laser-ablation.html

What are the potential benefits?
• Lower risk for side effects such as urinary incontinence, impotence and decreased bowel function, as compared to surgery or radiation therapy
• Minimally invasive procedure that does not require general anesthesia, radiation or surgical incisions
• If necessary, focal laser ablation may be repeated in the future.
• Unlike some prostate cancer treatments, focal laser ablation therapy does not limit the option to have radiation therapy or surgical treatment in the future.
• Some men with localized prostate cancer may not feel comfortable with the concept of active surveillance. In these cases, focal laser ablation may be a less aggressive option with a lower risk of side effects compared to surgery or radiation.
• Quick recovery: it is an outpatient procedure and patients can return to work the following day.