

## Radiation Therapy

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Radiation therapy uses high-energy radiation rays or particles to damage or destroy cancer cells. Normal cells are able to recover from this damage better than most cancer cells. Radiation given from outside your body is called external beam radiation therapy. Radiation given to inside your body is called internal radiation or brachytherapy.

Written information will also be provided by your health care team.

### **Radiation therapists**

Radiation therapists work with your oncologist and physicist to plan, coordinate and deliver your radiation therapy treatments. These therapists are trained to support you during your radiation treatments and can teach you how to care for yourself and manage side effects.

### **Arriving for radiation therapy at the Walker Family Cancer Centre (WFCC).**

Radiation treatment machines and services are located on the **first floor** of the WFCC.

The Radiation Therapy Program includes:

- Radiation treatment planning
- Radiation treatments
- Patient Review Clinic

When you arrive at the WFCC, check in at the registration desk and the clerk will direct you to the radiation therapy reception desk.

### **Radiation treatment planning**

Before your treatments can begin, your radiation therapy team will plan every part of your treatment. You will get a phone call with the date and time of your appointment for treatment planning.

It may be necessary for a mask or body mould to be made for you. Depending on where the radiation will be directed, the first step may be making a facemask

(shell) or body mould (cradle). These will be used to hold your head or body in the proper position during your treatments.

If you do not need a mask or mould, your first step will be a simulation appointment. A simulation appointment is like a practice session or dry run before the actual radiation treatment begins.

When you arrive for your appointment, a radiation therapist will explain the planning procedure and will take you to a special type of machine called a CT simulator. The radiation therapists along with other team members take measurements needed for the detailed planning of treatment. The treatment area on your skin may be tattooed and marked with an ink marker. This is the area that will be used when setting up for daily treatments.

This appointment usually takes between 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete. If a treatment plan is complex, more than one visit to the simulator may be needed before starting treatment.

### **Radiation treatments**

Once treatments begin, your appointments may be every day, Monday through Friday. A treatment may be over several days or weeks and may start on any day of the week. There are no scheduled treatments on weekends or statutory holidays.

A treatment appointment may be 15 to 30 minutes long. Most of this time is spent getting ready for the treatment. The actual amount of time that the radiation beam is on may be only 1 or 2 minutes.

While on treatment, the radiation therapists leave the room but will watch you on a TV screen and listen by intercom. The radiation can be stopped at any time to allow staff to enter the room and will switch off once the treatment has been given.

### **Patient Review Clinic**

While you are on radiation therapy, you will meet with your oncologist and primary nurse/ review radiation therapist on a regular basis to check how you are doing.

## Take care of yourself

Please follow these instructions during your radiation treatments and for about 2 weeks after treatments are done.

- Do not scrub or scratch the area being treated.
- Gently wash the skin in the treatment area with warm water and a mild non-deodorant soap such as Dove or baby soap while bathing or taking a shower.
- Pat dry with a soft towel.
- Protect the treated skin from all sources of hot or cold such as hot water bottles, heating pads, ice packs or saunas. Protect the skin from direct sunlight or harsh cold.
- Do not use creams or lotions on the treatment area unless directed by your health care team.
- Talk with your primary care team before swimming or exercising.
- Eat and drink to keep your nutritional levels up.
- Take rest periods during the day if needed and pace your activities.



If your cough changes and you begin to cough up green mucous or blood contact your doctor.

If you develop sudden chest pain, severe shortness Of breath or a temperature greater than 38<sup>0</sup>C go to The emergency department



If you are unable to attend or will be late, please call us at 905-378-4647, extension 43899 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

If possible, please give us 24 hours notice.