

Frequently Asked Questions – Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy can be overwhelming. This handout has a list of questions patients have asked in the past. We hope this will help guide you through your treatment.

When will I get the results of my CT scan?

The CT scan you had today was for treatment planning only. Doctors will not be able to use this scan to see changes in your tumor.

When is my first radiation therapy treatment appointment?

Your treatment plan will be made after your CT scan. The radiation therapist will call you in 1-2 weeks to set up your first treatment. They will try to work with your scheduling needs.

Where will my treatment be?

The therapist tells you which machine will be used for your treatment. You will get directions to that machine.

Where do I check-in?

Come straight down to Radiation Oncology. Check in at the desk right off the K elevator in the basement. You do **not** need to check-in at the main registration desk.

When will I see my doctor or nurse?

Your doctor and nurse will see you on a regular basis during treatment. They will follow your progress. They check for side effects. Tell them about any concerns you have. You will see your doctor once a week.

Can I feel the radiation?

You will not feel the radiation. You can hear the machine turn on. You may hear a buzzing sound.

Who is on my treatment team?

- **Radiation Therapists** work with doctors to give the daily treatment. They are under the doctor's prescription and supervision. They keep daily records. They check the treatment machines to make sure they are working properly.
- **Medical Physicists** work with your doctor to make your treatment plan. They also work with the dosimetrist. This makes sure treatments are right for you.
- **Dosimetrists** calculate the dose of radiation. This ensures the tumor gets the right amount of radiation. They use computers to create the treatment plan.

Will radiation make me sick?

You may have side effects from your radiation treatment. The side effects are based on the area of your body treated. For example, patients being treated to their abdomen or pelvis may feel nauseous. Ask

your therapists what side effects you may have. Feeling tired during radiation treatment is common. Skin reactions from the radiation are also common. You will get more information once you start treatment.

Will I lose my hair?

Treatment to the head can cause hair loss. Treatment to any part of the body covered with hair can cause hair loss in that area only. Hair loss can be permanent or temporary. This depends on your radiation dose.

When will I see side effects from the radiation?

As a rule, side effects start about 2 weeks after the start of your treatment. Your therapist will give you more information once you start treatment.

Will I be radioactive?

No. The only time there is radiation is when the machine is turned on. You are safe to be around others. You will not give off radiation.

What happens if I can't make it to one of my radiation therapy treatments?

Call your treatment machine desk phone number. Speak with a therapist. Try not to miss any of your treatments. You need to make up for a missed day. Another day would be added on to your treatment schedule.

How can I contact my doctor before I start treatment or in-between treatments?

To speak to your doctor or nurse call us at **(608)263-8500**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7230