

St. Teresa's Hospital Oncology Centre

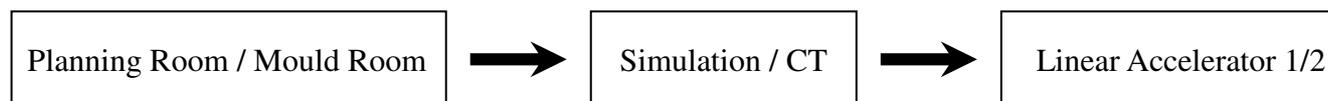
Patient Fact-sheet - General

I. Introduction

Radiotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that uses radiation to kill cancer cells. Radiation therapy can be used alone as the primary treatment or it can be used along with surgery and/or chemotherapy. Radiotherapy uses a machine called a Linear Accelerator, abbreviated as LINAC, to generate high energy x-rays. Re-irradiation or repeated treatment to the same body region may be given. Radiotherapy may also be used for benign diseases and diseases of the blood. Each patient has a tailor made radiotherapy dosimetric plan because it depends on the patient's condition, the type of cancer and the treatment site. Your attending physician will assess you before treatment and will discuss with you different treatment options and its risks and benefits.

II. Treatment

Radiotherapy Treatment Process



Radiotherapy is given in the St. Teresa's Hospital Oncology Centre. The actual radiation dose does not hurt though skin reaction may develop (see side effects). Before treatment, the radiation therapist will check the markings on your skin or mould for positioning. Then you will stay in the treatment room alone for a couple of minutes. You will be observed through closed circuit television or small windows and you may talk with the radiation therapists through an intercom if needed.

III. Side Effects

The following side effects may occur. The likelihood depends on the area and its condition before treatment, radiation dose and whether radiotherapy is combined with other treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy etc.

(A) Short-term side effects

The followings may occur during treatment and resolve gradually after treatment is completed:

1. Nausea, tiredness, loss of appetite
2. Skin redness, sore or hair loss in the treated area

(B) Long-term side effects

The followings may occur months to years after treatment and may persist:

1. Pigmentation and firmness (fibrosis) of the skin treated
2. Fibrosis, sore, stricture or fistula at the skin, wound or scar treated; swelling due to lymphoedema (uncommon)
3. Other long-term side effects
4. Second cancer (very rare)

Severe side effects are rare. The likelihood depends on the extent and dose of radiotherapy, patient factors and other concurrent treatments. In general, the risks may increase if repeated radiotherapy (re-irradiation) is given to the same site. Your attending physician will give you the most suitable treatment to minimize the side effects.

IV. Before each treatment

1. The details of treatment depend on the type and site of cancer and patient's condition. Your doctor will explain to you your treatment plan, side effects and after-care.
2. Moulds maybe made for you to keep you in treatment position to ensure accurate treatment and minimize radiation to surrounding organs and tissue.
3. Radiation therapists may arrange simulation for you to guide positioning for treatment.
4. Radiation therapists may make the skin mark for you in treatment position after planning, you should keep it as possible.
5. Please inform our staff before planning procedures if the following situation(s) appear:
 - Pregnancy / Last menstruation period / Metallic intrauterine device
 - Claustrophobia
 - Allergy history of medicine / tattoo
 - Electronic Medical Devices: Permanent pacemaker / Implantable cardio-verter defibrillator / Implantable neural stimulator / Metallic transplant plate / Metallic fixation
 - Denture / Hearing aid

Please Note: Female patients of childbearing age should take contraception measures during the period of radiotherapy.

V. After-care

1. You may feel tired or unwell after treatment. You may ask your family or friends to accompany you visiting the hospital and please prepare clothing for keeping warm.
2. During the period of radiotherapy treatment, medical consultations will be arranged for progress assessment and treatment of side effects.
3. Please inform radiation therapists to arrange medical consultations if you feel unwell.

VII. After treatment is completed

You doctor will arrange appointment for you to follow up the treatment side effects. Please attend your follow up appointments as scheduled and discuss with your doctor if you have any enquires.

VII. Remarks

1. The above items are for reference only.
2. Depending on the patient's condition and the extent and complexity of the treatment, treatment times may vary for each patient.
3. Please discuss with the radiation therapists if you have any special request on your treatment appointment.
4. In order to reduce the waiting time for all patients, radiation therapists will take into account patient's condition and length of treatment and arrange suitable radiation treatment time to each patient.