



# Understanding Your Radiation Oncology Appointments

*Welcome to Radiation Oncology in The Compton Center. We understand you may be feeling uneasy or nervous about beginning radiation oncology treatments. This information will help you understand the process and what to expect during your appointments. If you have any questions, please ask a staff member or call us at **(513) 424-2021**. We are here for you.*

## **Initial Consultation**

Your first appointment will begin with registration. Please bring your insurance card, a form of I.D. and a list of your medications. Next, the nurse will bring you to an exam room and collect your medical history, vital signs and other important information. Finally, you will meet one of our radiation oncologists. The radiation oncologist will review with you the indications for treatment and potential side effects involved. Plan to spend at least two hours with us on this first visit.

## **Simulation**

After your initial consultation, if you decide to proceed with radiation treatments, the area of interest will be scanned, a process known as simulation. It is done prior to radiation therapy so we can pinpoint the exact area that will be treated. This may be done on the same day as your initial consultation or depending on individual factors for each patient, it may be scheduled for a future date.

During this process, a treatment planning CT scan will be taken, treatment setup marks will be placed on your skin, and patient positioning devices will be made. The marks applied during this procedure should be kept on your skin until you return to start your treatments. Sometimes special preparation may be required for a simulation; you will be notified prior to your appointment if anything is necessary. For this procedure please allow 30 minutes, but times may vary.

## **Simulation Marks**

Please keep these marks on your skin. Be careful when bathing not to put soap directly on the marks. If soapy water washes or rinses over the marks, that is ok. Pat skin dry. If tape starts to come off, don't pull it off—the mark may come off with it. Please call us if you have questions.

## **Treatment Planning Process**

After your simulation, the images from the treatment planning CT scan are used to design a patient specific treatment plan. The radiation oncologist works with a dosimetrist and a physicist to put together the best plan for each patient. The planning process varies for each area treated, and it is customized for each individual patient. Treatment planning can take a few days or up to a week. Sometimes, the planning process may take longer if we are awaiting biopsies, outside treatment records and/or skin healing. Once your treatment plan is ready, you will receive a phone call to schedule your treatments.

## **First Day of Treatment**

On your first day of treatment, please check in at the front desk. You will be given a blue scan card that you will use to check in on a daily basis. We will explain this in more detail at that time. You will then proceed back

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to the changing area to change into a gown. When ready, please keep your blue scan card with you and have a seat. A radiation therapist will escort you to the treatment room.

We will have you use your blue scan card again before entering the treatment room. In the treatment room, you will be placed into the same position as you were during the treatment planning CT scan. The therapists will position and align you according to the treatment plan. There may be adjustments made that require a change in your skin marks. It is important to keep these marks on your skin. Port films will be taken to ensure that the treatment area lines up correctly. Please allow about 20 to 30 minutes for your first day of treatment.

### **Treatment Schedule/Appointments**

We will discuss an appointment time for treatments. The appointments will be made for the same time every day, Monday through Friday. If you have a chemo or doctor's appointment, let the therapists know and they will try to arrange an appointment to accommodate your needs.

If you need follow-up testing during your treatment schedule, the radiation oncologist will order it and our staff will be glad to schedule it at a time convenient for you.

### **Notes/Questions:**

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### **Additional Help**

Some patients will see a dietitian. The dietitian will meet you after or before your treatment in our department. A few patients will see a social worker. All appointments will be made for your convenience around your appointment time.

### **Weekly Doctor Visit**

Once a week you will visit with the doctor usually after you receive your radiation treatment. The nurse will take vitals and ask if there are any changes to your condition. If you have questions you would like to ask, write them down and bring them with you.

### **Second Simulation**

Sometimes the radiation oncologist will ask for a second CT scan in order to determine the next phase of your treatment. If the doctor decides this is necessary, he/she or a therapist will explain it to you.

### **Last Day of Treatment and Follow Up**

On the last day of treatment, you will be given a discharge paper with the date and time of your follow-up appointment with the radiation oncologist. Any follow-up testing or visits that are needed will be discussed at that appointment.

Thank you for letting us serve you.