

Information for patients receiving CyberKnife treatment to the spine

Please bring this handout with you to all of your radiation appointments.

Appointments

If you take pain or anti-anxiety medication, please bring it with you to all planning and treatment appointments. Take the medication as appropriate before each procedure.

Appointment	Date	Time
Mould Room		
Treatment Planning		
First Treatment*		
Follow-up appointment*		

*You will be called at home with or receive these appointments while on treatment

Your Primary Team at the Juravinski Cancer Centre (JCC)

Main telephone number: 905-387-9495

Radiation Oncology Doctor _____ Ext. _____

Radiation Oncology Nurse _____ Ext. _____

Secretary _____ (ext.)

Medical Oncology Doctor _____ Ext. _____

Medical Oncology Nurse _____ Ext. _____

Secretary _____ (ext.)

Clinical Trials Nurse _____ Ext. _____

What happens if I cannot make an appointment or will be late?

- Call 905-387-9495, ext. 63808 and let the clerk know.
- Please give 48 hours notice if you need to change your appointment.

Where do I go for my appointments?

- Once at the JCC, take the main elevators to Level 0.
- Check in at the reception desk. The receptionist will instruct you on how to get to the right area.

What if I have more questions?

If you have questions or concerns before or after the treatment planning appointment:

- Call 905-387-9495 and ask for your radiation oncology nurse.

Radiation Therapy Department regular clinic hours:

- 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday. We are closed on holidays.

If you have difficulty lying flat, please tell your radiation oncology nurse as soon as possible. If you cannot maintain a stable flat position for one hour, other treatment options may have to be explored with your Radiation Oncologist.

Mould Room appointment

As part of your treatment planning appointment, a mask may be made of your head and neck in the Mould Room. The mask may be needed to keep you still and prevent your neck from moving during radiation treatments.

If you are having your lower spine treated, you will NOT need a mask.

At your Mould Room appointment a radiation therapist reviews what happens and answers your questions. The appointment takes about 30 minutes. If your treatment planning appointment is the same day as your mould appointment, there will be about an hour in between these appointments to let your mask set. Plan to be at the JCC for at least 2 hours if a mask is needed.

Preparation for your Mould Room appointment, if you are told you need a mask

- Remove all jewellery from the head and neck area.
- For men, shave your face and neck in the morning. The materials used in making the mask may stick to whiskers and pull them out when it is removed.

No facial hair, beards or moustaches



Clean shaven

Making the Aquaplast mask

A piece of plastic mesh is warmed in a water bath.

Once warmed, the mesh is stretched over your face and neck and gently massaged to take on your shape.

The mesh is allowed to dry for 15 minutes, when it will cool and harden. The mask is lifted off and allowed to set completely.



What happens at the treatment planning appointment?

- The appointment takes about 30 to 45 minutes.
 - A radiation therapist reviews what will happen and answers your questions.
 - An I.D. photo is taken.
 - You may need to change into a hospital gown.
 - Planning is done in the Simulator Room. Radiation therapists, medical and planning staff are with you in the Simulator Room.
 - The therapists guide you into a stable position. You will need to be in this position for each of your radiation treatments.
 - A photo may be taken to help reproduce the set-up.
 - A planning CT scan of the area to be treated is taken. If you have appointments for other CT or MRI scans, the planning CT scan does not replace them.
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When will my radiation treatments start?

- After the treatment planning appointment, time is needed to make your treatment plan.
- You will be called at home with the start date and time of your treatment.
- The JCC aims to give you at least 2 days notice before your treatment starts. This is not always possible.

Treatment appointment(s)

Please arrive for treatment at least 15 minutes before your appointment. Your appointment lasts about 1 to 2 hours. Some of that time is used for answering questions, as well as setting up and taking images to check your position.

Once you check in with reception, a radiation therapist will come and find you in the main waiting area and show you to the treatment area.

In the treatment area you will be set-up on the treatment couch just as you were in the simulator room.



Images are taken with the treatment machine to make sure that you are in the correct position. You may feel the treatment couch moving. You can be seen and heard by a radiation therapist at all times on a TV screen and intercom.

Side effects

The side effects you have will depend on:

- any other treatments you may have had
- your general health
- the location of your tumour or lesion
- the current treatment plan

Nausea and vomiting

Nausea and vomiting can be common side effects. They are more common if the treatment is directed at the lower spine, or close to the digestive tract. If you have nausea and/or vomiting please tell a member of your radiation treatment team. There are medications and ways to limit discomfort.

Pain flare

Treating a lesion in the spine can cause a temporary increase in pain. Ensure that you have an adequate supply of pain medication to prevent discomfort.

Skin irritation

Radiation treatment can cause skin irritation. Follow the instructions provided to minimize any discomfort.

Side effects that occur after treatment is finished

Within weeks and up to a few months after treatment you may notice new or worsening side effects such as weakness, increased tiredness and/or skin discolouration.

Ways to reduce skin irritation

Taking care of your skin can help lessen any skin reaction you may experience. Please follow these instructions during your radiation treatment and for about 2 weeks after treatment or until the reaction starts to fade.

Washing

- Wash daily with warm water during shower or bath.
- Use a mild non-deodorant soap over skin such as Dove or baby soap.
- Wash gently and pat the skin dry with a soft cotton towel.
- Be gentle in areas where there are skin folds.
- Avoid scratching and scrubbing the skin in the area being treated.

Protection and prevention

- Protect the treated skin from all sources of heat or cold. Avoid hot water bottles, heating pads, ice packs and sun exposure.
- Glaxal base lotion is recommended for use on the treated area(s). This helps moisturize the skin.
- Any other creams or lotions to be used on the treated area should be reviewed by your radiation oncology team.
- Avoid placing adhesive tape or band-aids on the treated skin.

After your treatments

- Your skin in the treatment area may be dry and sensitive for some period of time after your treatments are done.
- The area that has been treated will be more sensitive to the sun. Keep the area covered or use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15, with UVA and UVB protection.

Medications

You should continue to use your stomach medication _____ as prescribed, until you are done taking dexamethasone.

Pre-treatment anti-nausea medication instructions

On each treatment day, take _____ times per day.

Dexamethasone instructions

You will need to slowly decrease or taper the amount of dexamethasone you take. Take dexamethasone as instructed by your radiation team. Always take dexamethasone with food, and early in the morning.

If during the taper there is any increase in symptoms such as headache, nausea, vomiting or drowsiness, go back to the last dose of dexamethasone and call your radiation oncology nurse.

If you have diabetes, you should see your family doctor once a week to have your blood sugar checked during your taper.



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