

Your care during radiation therapy to the head

Your radiation treatment appointments

- Please arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your appointment time.
- At the Level 0 reception desk, scan the barcode on your radiation schedule or check in with receptionist, then go to the waiting area closest to your treatment unit.
- Appointments are every day, Monday to Friday. There are no scheduled treatments on the weekends or holidays.
- Your treatment may be over several days or weeks and may start on any day of the week. We will give you a schedule of your treatment appointments.

Treatment appointment changes

- Your schedule may change while you are on treatment. We will try to give you as much notice as possible.



If you are unable to attend or will be late, please call us at 905-387-9495, ext. 63600 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

If you are unwell, please call your Primary Team.

Questions

- If you have questions about your schedule, treatments or side effects, please ask your Radiation Therapist.

Your review appointments

- You will meet with a health care provider on a regular basis to check how you are doing. This may or may not be your doctor.
- When you come for each appointment, please complete a Symptom Assessment. You will be asked to rate different symptoms about how you are feeling along with your activity level. You can complete the Symptom Assessment at home on-line <https://isaac.cancercare.on.ca/> or on a touch screen computer at the JCC.
- By completing a Symptom Assessment you will help us understand how you are feeling. Together we can discuss what you need help with most and offer help.

Patient Assessment Office

- If you have concerns or problems related to radiation treatment on a day that you do not have a review appointment, you can see a nurse in the Patient Assessment Office (next to Clinic G). Your Radiation Therapist may direct or recommend that you go to the Patient Assessment Office.
- If your radiation treatment appointment is late in the day (after 4:00 pm), and you wish to see a nurse, you are welcome to arrive early. After you check in, walk over to the treatment area, speak with a therapist who will then direct you to the Patient Assessment Office.

While on treatment

- When you arrive in the radiation unit, you may need to change into a hospital gown.
 - Treatment appointments are 10 to 30 minutes long. Most of the time is spent getting ready for treatment. The actual time of the radiation beam is usually less than a few minutes each day.
 - A therapist will guide you into the planned position and you will need to lie still and breathe normally. You will not feel the radiation at all. The machine makes a humming noise when treatment is being delivered.
 - During treatment, the Radiation Therapists leave the room. They will watch you on a TV screen and speak with you by intercom. You can signal a Therapist by calling out or waving your hand.
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Side effects

The side effects you have will depend on:

- your general health
- any other treatments you may have had or are having
- the location of your tumour or lesion
- the number of radiation treatments



Your health care team will check for side effects.
Please tell them your concerns.

Some of the possible side effects include

- headaches
- nausea and vomiting
- fatigue
- scalp irritation
- hair loss

Please refer to the booklet “**Information for patients receiving treatment for a brain tumour**” that you were given when you met with your oncologist and primary nurse. The booklet discusses many of the possible side effects. Your primary team will discuss these side effects with you.

Take care of yourself

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

- Do not rub, scratch, or scrub the treatment area.
- Gently wash the scalp in the treatment area with warm water and a mild baby shampoo, baby soap or non-deodorant soap (Dove) while bathing or taking a shower.
- Gently pat dry with a soft towel.
- Protect the skin from all sources of heat or cold such as hot water bottles, heating pads, ice packs or saunas.
- Keep your head covered wear a soft scarf or wide brimmed hat. Protect your head from direct sun or harsh cold
- Do not use any creams or lotions (including sunscreens), on the treatment area unless directed by your health care team.

Activity and eating

- If you experience tiredness it may increase for a week after treatment but should gradually go away. Rest when needed, and pace your activities.
- Talk with your primary team before swimming or increasing your physical activity.
- Eat and drink to keep your nutritional and energy levels up. Changes in what you eat may be needed.

Sun and skin after treatment

- Treated skin is always more sun sensitive.
- Protect your skin from the sun by keeping the area covered with a soft scarf or wide brimmed hat. When the skin is uncovered, use a sunscreen with SPF 30 or more and UVA/UVB protection.



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