

PATIENT HAVING RADIATION THERAPY



RADIATION THERAPY

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

RADIOTHERAPY

Radiotherapy is widely used to treat tumors because its ability to kill cancer cells.

RADIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT

The department is open during weekdays between 7:50-15:15.

The department is equipped two treatment units and one planning CT-unit.

During doctor's appointment an oncologist will explain you a preliminary plan for radiation therapy and what kind of effects there might come as a result of radiotherapy. If you need a certificate for sick leave, a doctor will prescribe it.

You may commute between the hospital and home with public transportation if your overall wellbeing is good enough. If needed, a doctor may give you for example a permit to use a taxi but the doctor will first assess your condition.



PLANNING CT SCANS AND X-RAYS

Before anything else your fingerprint identification will be taken. This is to ensure that you will receive treatment that is planned especially for you.

To start the treatment planning you are imaged with CT-unit for treatment planning and dose calculation purposes. Treatment volume will be planned with the help of these scans and x-rays. You might be re-imaged during your treatment if there is need for re-evaluation of the treatment volume.

A radiographer assists you to the proper position on the imaging couch of the CT-unit. Afterwards you will receive radiation therapy exactly in the same position in the treatment room.

To have planning images it will take about 15 minutes. You have to lie still however you may breathe normally. Once all the images has been taken nurse will tattoo four small dots onto your skin. These dots will assist in finding the right position when come to have your treatment.

A radiotherapist will discuss with you about beginning your radiotherapy treatment. The first radiotherapy treatment is usually 1-3 weeks after planning.



DOSE PLANNING

A doctor will contour the radiotherapy targets onto the CT images. The physician will also mark the critical volumes of the targets of which radiation dose must not exceed the internationally agreed upon maximum dose.

The doctor decides the overall radiation dose you need to be given and also how often you receive radiotherapy treatment and the amount of dose per treatment.

After this the physicist will perform dose calculations to optimize dose to the treatment volume. The dose calculation report will explain precisely the details of your radiation treatment.

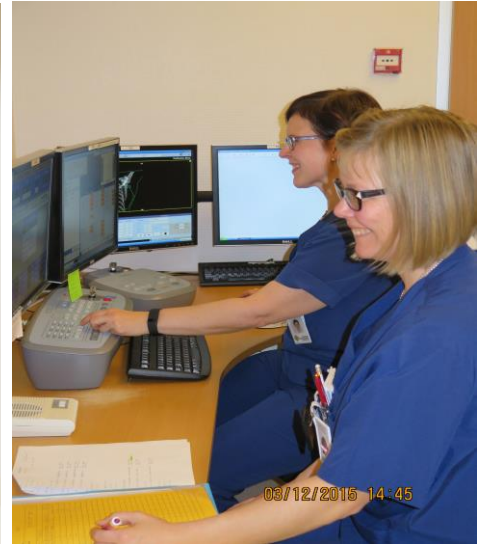
The radiation therapy will be directed precisely to the tumor volume. Radiation to healthy tissue is to be avoided.



RADIOTHERAPY

Radiotherapy is completely painless. You do not emit radiation after the treatment. You will receive radiation according to the treatment plan designed just for you. Your treatment period may take for a few days or it may take several weeks to complete. One treatment will take 10 to 20 minutes.

During the treatment you will alone in the room however the radiographers are able to see you and hear you. The nurses watch you the whole time during the radiotherapy process from the control room.



You may breathe normally however you should lie very still during the few minutes it takes to give your treatment in order that the radiotherapy hits at the correct targets.

Radiotherapy can usually be given from various directions and therefore the machine is moving around you during the treatment. During the treatment control x-ray images will be taken to ensure that treatment is aimed at correct targets.

The radiographers take care of you well-being during the whole length of radiotherapy treatment period. You may tell them if you have experienced side effects to treatment.

FURTHER FOLLOW-UP

After the radiotherapy treatment your well-being can be followed up at a cancer polyclinic, another polyclinic or health care centre or at your family doctor's office.

You may call the radiotherapy department and ask about matters relating to radiotherapy even after a month after the completion of your treatment.

It is vital that you also take good care of your health.

SUPPORT SERVICES DURING RADIOTHERAPY TREATMENT

You may discuss matters relating to your disease with various professionals. The staff of the radiotherapy department may reserve you an appointment for the following professionals:

- a social worker
- a rehabilitation counsellor
- a dietician
- a physical therapist
- a hospital pastor
- a psychiatric nurse

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Radiation department.....☎ 02 627 3731

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