

Radiation Therapy Process for Cervical Cancer Patients

Step 1: Consultation With Your Doctor

- A scheduler will call to make an appointment for you with one of our doctors specializing in cervical cancer. Please let the scheduler know if you need an interpreter and for which language.
- Your first appointment will be a time to talk with the doctor about your condition and learn how radiation therapy can help. You will have a pelvic exam, sign a consent for treatment, and be scheduled for the next step, a CT simulation.

Step 2: CT Simulation

- The CT simulation takes pictures of the inside of your body, providing your doctor with information about the size and location of the cancer. To give the best images you will need to take Milk of Magnesia, a mild laxative, the morning and around noon the day before your CT Sim, and drink water to fill your bladder when you arrive at the clinic. An IV may be started for a contrast solution and a 'marker' may be placed in the vagina. After the CT Sim the radiation therapist will give you the date and time of your first radiation treatment.

Step 3: EBRT/OTV/Chemotherapy

- You are ready to begin external beam radiation therapy (EBRT) which is 5 days a week for approximately 5-6 weeks. You will receive a treatment calendar from your radiation therapist the day of your first treatment.
- Once a week you will see your radiation doctor. We call this appointment an 'On Treatment Visit', or 'OTV'. Education about what to expect from the radiation process is provided by a registered nurse during your first OTV.

- It is important that your labs are checked frequently if you are on chemotherapy. Chemotherapy can cause you to become weak, making it harder for your body to fight infection. Your radiation nurse will help coordinate your lab appointments.

Step 4: HDR

- The '*Tandem & Ovoid*' and '*Interstitial*' are brachytherapy procedures designed to target the cancer from inside your body with High Dose Rate radiation (HDR). HDR begins after you have received EBRT for approximately 4 weeks. You will be scheduled for 4 to 5 procedures and receive instruction about those procedures when it's closer to time.
- Once you have finished with EBRT **and** HDR you will have completed radiation therapy and return to our clinic in 4-6 weeks for a follow-up appointment.