

# SBRT for Patients with Lung Cancer

This information will help prepare you and your caregiver for your treatment.

## What to Expect

You will receive external beam radiation therapy, a noninvasive treatment.

## Before the Procedure

You will meet with the radiation oncologist, who will explain the procedure in detail and ask you to sign a consent form for treatment and/or research purposes.

- To help plan the treatment, additional procedures also may be done at this time.
- These procedures may include a CT scan, pulmonary function tests, or a lung biopsy.
- Please inform your physician if you have a pacemaker or other heart device.

## Simulation Day

Plan to be at the Radiation Oncology Center approximately 1.5 – 2.5 hours for the simulation.

- You will be asked to put on a hospital gown.
- The doctor and the therapists will place you on a specialized body frame to do the CT scan. Intravenous contrast will usually be administered. A CT scan, and in some cases an MRI, is performed after the CT simulation to help the team of doctors, physicists (person who oversees the quality of patient plans and radiation delivery machines), and dosimetrists (person who determines the proper radiation dose for treatment) develop a personalized treatment plan.
- Tattoos will be placed to help ensure that you are in the same position for each treatment. These permanent tattoos are the size of a pencil point.

At the time we schedule the appointment for your simulation, please tell us if you are diabetic or have ever had a reaction to IV contrast.

## Treatment Days

Plan to be at the Radiation Oncology Center approximately 1 hour.

- Your doctor and therapist will place you in the body frame again.
- X-rays will be taken to verify proper set-up and the treatment will be given.

You may resume normal activities, including driving, immediately after the treatment.

## Follow-Up Appointments

A follow-up visit with your radiation oncologist is scheduled 2 – 3 months after your last treatment for symptom management. Typically your doctor will not be able to comment on tumor response at this appointment.

- After 3 months, a CT scan is usually done.
- We may also request tests to monitor your pulmonary function.

## Side Effects

Some people will develop side effects that usually occur within 1 – 3 weeks following the start of radiation therapy. You may experience some or all of the symptoms below, but they are usually temporary and will subside a few weeks after treatment is complete.

- Fatigue is very common during treatment.
- Temporary skin changes may occur, including redness, dryness, peeling, and itching of the treated area. Darkening of the skin in the treated area can also occur. The timing of the peak skin reaction varies, so please discuss with your physician. Healing often takes 3 – 4 weeks.
- Do not smoke as it will irritate the lining of your airway and cause you to cough.
- Use pillows to elevate your chest/head while you sleep.
- Use a cold-mist humidifier while you sleep.

Please discuss problems or concerns about side effects or any part of your treatment with your doctor, nurse, or therapist.

## Care

Bathe and shower daily using warm water and a mild unscented soap such as Dove® or Purpose®.

- **Do not** use a washcloth, scrubbing cloth, or brush when bathing.
- Pat skin dry with a soft towel or allow to air-dry.
- Apply unscented moisturizers, such as Aquaphor™ or Aloe vera (90 to 100 percent Aloe vera), to the treated area 2 – 3 times a day. **Do not** use moisturizers within 4 hours before your radiation treatment.

To minimize skin irritation, wear loose-fitting cotton underwear and clothing.

Since the area being treated has the potential for increased sensitivity than the rest of your skin, always protect the area from sun exposure after your treatment ends. Use PABA-free sunscreen with a SPF of at least 30.

A daily vitamin is OK during your treatment. **Do not** take other vitamins or any supplements, including both nutritional and herbal supplements, without talking to your doctor.

Swimming is permitted **only if**:

- You **do not** have any skin reactions during your treatment
- Pool is chlorinated

**Rinse off** chlorine right after getting out of pool.

## Caution

- Heating pads and/or very hot water can cause pain or skin irritation to the treatment area.

- Hot tubs or saunas are not encouraged while receiving radiation treatment.
- **Do not** use products with alcohol, including alcohol pads, on your skin in the area being treated.

**Contact your nurse and doctor if you experience:**

- Cough, chest pains, shortness of breath, or fever. These are symptoms of radiation pneumonitis, which is treated differently than pneumonia.
- Pain in your rib cage
- Heartburn or tar-colored stools

All of these symptoms can occur weeks or months after treatment.

**Contact Us**

During office hours, call your radiation oncologist. After-hours, call 214-645-8525.