

Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy



Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program

www.nscancercare.ca

Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy

Your doctor has talked about stereotactic body radiation therapy treatments with you. Stereotactic body radiation therapy allows high dose radiation beams to focus on a small area. Your team includes radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiation therapists and oncology nurses. This information will support the teaching you will get from the team.

If you have any questions, please call the Nova Scotia Cancer Centre Patient Message Line at 902-473-6067.

How does stereotactic body radiation therapy work?

Stereotactic body radiation therapy uses radiation to shrink or control the growth of a tumour or abnormal cells. This therapy either kills the cells directly or disrupts the ability of the cells to grow.

How is stereotactic body radiation therapy different from conventional radiotherapy?

The type of radiation is the same for both treatments. However, stereotactic body radiation is able to focus the radiation on smaller areas than conventional radiotherapy. This lets us give higher doses of radiation at one time. For this reason the number of treatments may be less than conventional radiation treatment and not necessarily given on a daily basis.

What do I get ready for my treatment?

- You will need a special CT scan done at the Cancer Centre. This CT scan is used to plan your treatment. It is called “simulation”.
- One of our receptionists will contact you with a date and time for your simulation.
- You will come to the Cancer Centre and meet with a group of Radiation Therapists.
- They will take you to a room and make a custom cushion for you to lie in for your treatment. This is called a “Vac-lock.” This helps you stay still during your treatment.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

- Your Radiation Oncologist will take X-rays to watch how you breathe. Your doctor may decide to use a piece of equipment to help control your movement during breathing. This piece will put slight pressure on your stomach.
- Next you will go to another room for a CT scan.
- Before the scan, the therapists will ask you to lie down in your custom cushion. It is important that you lie still.
- You may need to have an intravenous (IV) and some contrast dye for your CT scan. The therapists will ask you questions about your allergies. Make sure to tell them if you know you are allergic to contrast dye used for X-rays.
- You will get small tattoo marks on your skin. These marks help to position you for your treatments.

What happens during my treatment?

- You will get a specific time and date to come for your treatment.
- The therapists will call you into the radiation treatment room and ask you to lie on the treatment table.
- There will be medical physicists present during your treatment.
- The therapists will make you comfortable with a pillow under your knees and blankets to keep you warm.
- You will be asked to lie down in your custom cushion and the therapists will place the positioning markers on your skin.
- The therapists will then position you and the machine so that the prescribed treatment can be given accurately.
- The set-up is complex and can take up to 30 minutes. It is important that you stay still and breathe normally.
- Once you are in position, the therapists will leave the room. The treatment is controlled from outside the room. You will be alone in the room during your treatment.
- The therapists can see and hear you at all times. The therapists can use an intercom to talk to you. They can stop the treatment and enter the room at any time if needed.
- You will not feel anything during the treatment but you may hear the machine working. The machine will move around you in order to treat you in the right place. You may see or hear the machine as it moves but it will never touch you.

- The therapists may come into the room at times during the treatment to reposition the machine.
- The treatment is delivered from different positions so you may feel the treatment bed move.
- The actual treatment time is about 10 minutes. You will be in the treatment room for 30 minutes or longer. This depends on the time it takes to set up.
- You will be given the time for your appointments one week at a time.

How many treatments will I need?

- Most patients will have a range of 4 to 8 treatments. Each patient is different, and your radiation oncologist will plan on the best number of treatments for your care.
- A member of your health care team will let you know how many treatments you will need and how the treatments will be scheduled.

What happens after my treatments are finished?

- After your last treatment your treatment team will review any important instructions with you.
- The side effects from treatment may continue for a period of time even though your treatment has finished. Continue with the instructions you have been given until any side effects go away.
- You will get a followup appointment. This appointment may include tests such as CT or PET scans.

Looking for more health information?

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>
 Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
 For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.
 Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

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 The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.
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