

Stereotactic Radiation Therapy to the Brain

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Your doctor has talked to you about stereotactic radiation therapy. Stereotactic radiation therapy allows high dose radiation beams to be focused on a small area.

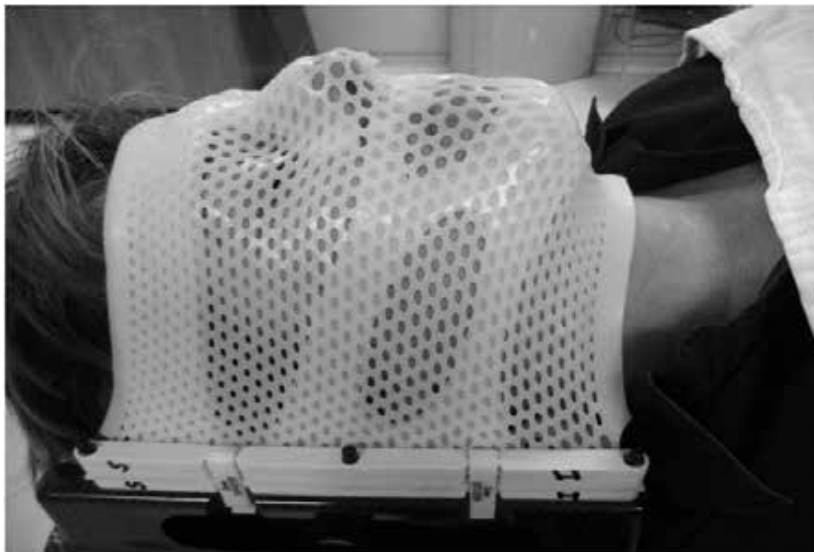
Your radiation therapy team includes radiation oncologists, medical physicists, radiation therapists, and oncology nurses. The information in this pamphlet supports the teaching you will get from your team.

How does stereotactic radiation therapy work?

Stereotactic radiation therapy uses radiation to shrink or control the growth of abnormal cells or tumors. The radiation may kill the cells directly or stop the cells from growing.

How do I get ready for my treatment?

- At your first appointment, you will have a mask made, this takes about an hour.
- The mask is needed to limit any movement of your head during your treatment
- The mask is made from plastic mesh. When placed in warm water, the plastic becomes very warm and soft. This lets us mould the mask around your face and the back of your head.
- The mask has many small holes so you can breathe easily.
- After your mask is made, you will have a CT scan done at the Cancer Centre. This CT scan is called a “simulation”. It is used to plan your treatment.
- You will wear your mask for the simulation CT scan.
- The CT scan only takes a few minutes. It is important that you lie still. You will not get an injection for this CT scan.
- An MRI may also be required to help create your treatment plan. If needed, the MRI would be a separate appointment.

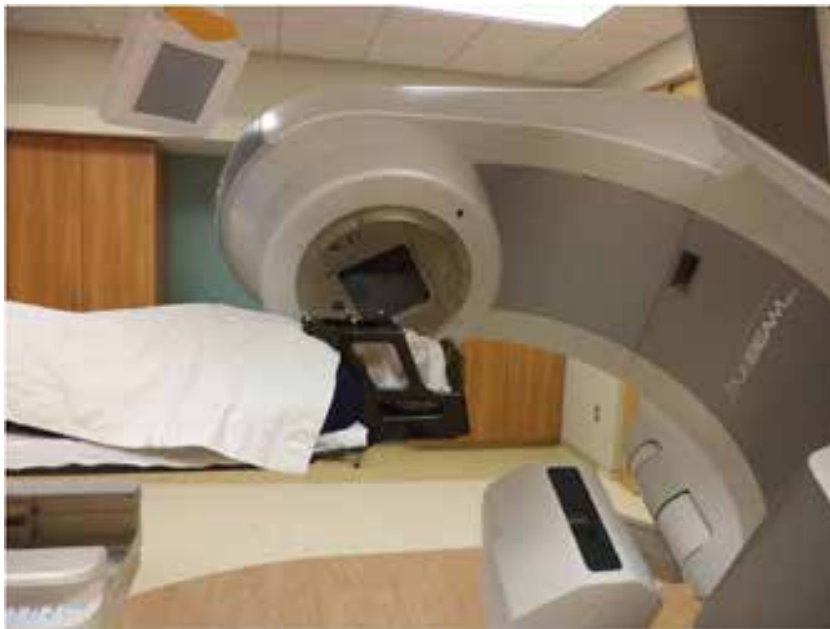


How long will it be until I start my radiation treatments?

- The time it takes to plan a treatment can vary
- Once your treatment plan is ready you will receive a phone call with your treatment start date and time.

What happens during my treatment?

- The therapists will call you into the treatment room. You will be asked to lie on the treatment bed.
- You will need to wear your mask during treatment. The therapists will make you comfortable using knee pillows and blankets.
- The therapists will then position you and the machine so the radiation treatment can be given accurately. 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 will be able to 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, but it will never touch you.
- The treatment bed can be moved remotely but it is the therapists doing this from outside of the room.

- The therapists may come into the room at times different times during the treatment to reposition the machine. You may feel the treatment bed move.
- You will be in the treatment room for 30 minutes or longer depending on the time it takes to position you. Your mask is required for positioning and treatment so you will be wearing your mask for most of your appointment

How many treatments will I need?

- The number of treatments may vary from person to person. Your Radiation Oncologist tell you how many treatments you will need.
- Treatments are given Monday to Friday only, but may start any day of the week.

What happens after my treatments are finished?

- Close to the end of your treatments, your radiation therapy team will review any important instructions with you.
- The side effects from your treatment may continue for a period of time even though your treatment has finished. Continue with the instructions you received until side effects stop.
- You will get a follow-up appointment. This appointment may include tests such as a CT scan or an MRI.
- Your follow-up appointment may be a few weeks/months after your treatments are finished.

What if I am only having one treatment?

- Come to the Radiation Therapy Department 1 hour before your treatment time.
- Your oncology nurse will talk with you and may give you some medications to take before your treatment.
- You may have been given prescriptions for these medications prior to your appointment, if so please make sure you fill your prescriptions and bring the medications with you.
- After your treatment, you will need to stay for 1 hour so that your oncology nurse and radiation oncologist can make sure you are well enough to go home.
- You should not drive after your treatment. Make sure someone comes with you to take you home.

For patients having 3-5 treatments:

- On your first day of treatment, you may be asked to come to the Radiation Therapy Department 1 hour before your treatment time.
- Your oncology nurse may talk with you and may give you some medications to take before your treatment. You may need to take these medications before each treatment, your oncology nurse will instruct you.
- You may have been given prescriptions for these medications prior to your appointment, if so please make sure you fill your prescriptions and bring the medications with you.
- After your first treatment, you may need to stay for 30 minutes so that your oncology nurse and radiation oncologist can make sure you are well enough to go home.
- You should not drive after your treatment. Make sure someone comes with you to take you home.

If you have any questions, please call:

- › QEll Cancer Centre (Patient Line) 902-473-6067
- › Cape Breton Cancer Centre 902-567-8100

Looking for more health information?

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/cancer>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

*Prepared by: Nova Scotia Health Cancer Care Program
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It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider.
If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.*