

Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT) to Your Abdomen

SBRT is a type of high dose radiation used to treat small tumours in different parts of your body. This handout offers information about this treatment. It is important you read this handout to help you prepare for appointments.

After each radiation treatment, it is safe for you to be around other people (including children) and pets. You are not radioactive.

Understanding your CT simulation appointment

CT simulation is the first step in preparing you for SBRT treatment. Your abdomen moves when you breathe. CT simulation allows your radiation oncologist to see your tumour better as your abdomen moves with your breathing.

It is important your abdomen stays in the same place during your treatments. There are 2 ways to do this. Your healthcare team will choose the way that works best for you.

1. Using an Active Breathing Coordinator (ABC) device

The ABC device helps you hold your breath. A radiation therapist will tell you how to use this device. You will need to use the ABC device for your CT simulation as well as your radiation treatments. This will help you hold your breath when the radiation therapist asks you to (see picture #1 below).



Picture #1. This picture shows the ABC device that will help you hold your breath.

2. Breathing normally

A custom cushion will be made for you. An inflatable belt will be placed around your abdomen. (see picture # 2 on the next page). The cushion will mold to your back and arms to help you stay in one position during your treatments. Tell your radiation team if you have any problems with this.



Picture # 2. The picture above shows the cushion with the inflatable belt over your abdomen.

You will be given permanent tattoos (small markings) at this appointment. These tattoos will be used to position you for daily radiation treatments.

Special eating instructions

You need to follow these special eating instructions before your CT simulation and radiation treatment appointments.

Before your CT simulation and your radiation treatment appointments, you need to:

- ✓ Eat the same light meal 2 hours before every appointment. This is to make sure you have the same amount of contents in your stomach before your appointment.

Choose the instructions that go with the time of your appointment.

☐ **If your appointment is in the morning**

- Eat a light breakfast 2 hours before your appointment. Do not eat or drink for 2 hours before your appointment (except for sips of water to take medications).
- Example of a light breakfast: 1 cup of tea, coffee, water or other non-carbonated beverage, and 2 slices of bread or toast with any spread.

☐ **If your appointment is in the afternoon**

- Eat your regular breakfast.
- Eat a light lunch 2 hours before your appointment. Do not eat or drink for 2 hours before your appointment (except for sips of water to take medications).
- Example of a light lunch: 1 cup of tea, coffee, water or other non-carbonated beverage, and 2 slices of bread or toast with any spread.

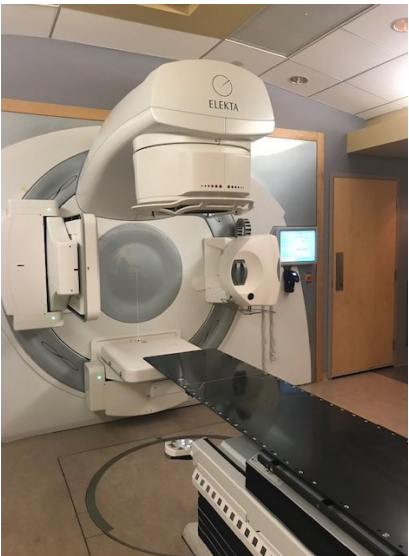
Eat your normal meals **after** your CT simulation and radiation treatment appointments.

Your radiation treatments

You will know how long each radiation treatment will be after you have your first one. Each treatment takes about 1 hour.

Radiation treatments do not hurt. You will be positioned using your tattoos. Once you are in the right position on the treatment bed, it is important you don't move. This will make sure the treatment is given correctly. If you normally have muscle or bone pain, it may help to take a pain medication (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) before your radiation treatment appointments. This will help you to be comfortable during your treatments.

It is important for your healthcare team to find the exact position of your tumour(s) before and during each treatment. X-ray images will be taken to verify the position of your tumour(s). Changes to your position will be made if needed. To make these changes the treatment bed you are lying on may move a little.



Picture #3. This picture shows the type of radiation machine that is used to give your SBRT treatment.

You will be scheduled for follow up appointments with your radiation oncologist after your radiation treatments are finished.

Side effects of your radiation treatment

You will be given the handout “Radiation Therapy to the Abdomen” at your CT simulation appointment. This handout offers you information on the possible side effects of radiation therapy. You can find more information in the Canadian Cancer Society’s booklet “Radiation Therapy: A Guide for People with Cancer” found at cancer.ca under publications.

If you have a problem or concern about a symptom or side effect from your cancer treatment:

1. Call your primary nurse at the cancer centre from Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm, (except on holidays). Use the phone number your primary nurse gave you.
2. Contact CareChart Digital Health from Monday to Friday, 4 pm to 8:30 am and anytime on weekends and holidays for symptom management support.

Talk to a nurse using one of these options:

- Call the after-hours telephone line at 1-877-681-3057.
- Request a video call by going to carechart.ca.
- Use the CareChart Digital Health App. This App is available to download for iOS or Android devices.

Call 911 or go to the Emergency Department at the hospital closest to you for a medical emergency. Talk to a member of your healthcare team if you have questions or do not understand any of the information in this handout.

Last reviewed: December 2024