Radiation Therapy - TREATMENT

How long does treatment take?

Courses of treatment are individually prescribed by your Radiation Oncologist and vary with each patient. Treatment schedules can range from a single treatment to a course of treatments delivered five times a week for up to seven weeks or more.

Usually the first treatment appointment will take twenty minutes or longer. The average time in the treatment room is about ten minutes. Some treatments take longer; your Radiation Therapists will let you know. The treatment itself takes only a few minutes – most of the time is spent accurately positioning you for treatment.

Daily routine

When you come for treatment please bring your appointment card with you and report to Reception each day. Most patients will be asked to change into a gown for treatment, as for CT, because clothing needs to be kept clear of the treatment area. Baskets are provided to take your belongings with you to the treatment unit.

The Radiation Therapists will ask for your appointment card and will show you into the treatment room and position you on the treatment couch. All you need to do is find a relaxed position, and stay as still as possible throughout the appointment. Using the tattoos (permanent dots) on your skin, the Radiation Therapists will move you to ensure you are in the correct treatment position and then position the treatment machine around you.

To deliver the treatment the Radiation Therapists leave the room for the short time the machine is on and watch you on closed circuit television. There is also an intercom for treatment staff to listen, or talk to you. During this time the machine will move around you to deliver your treatment. The radiation switches off automatically after your prescribed dose has been given. If required, the treatment machines can easily be switched off at any time.

It is normal to feel a bit anxious about the machines. Just try to relax. Remember the Physics Staff and the Radiation Therapists regularly check the machines to ensure they are working accurately.