



### Where will I go for radiotherapy treatment?

Radiotherapy is only given in specialist cancer centres because the treatment is very specialised. It may involve long journeys to get to your nearest cancer centre, depending on where you live. If you have a long way to travel each day to get to your radiotherapy appointment you may feel more tired, especially if you have side-effects from the treatment. If you can, ask a friend or relative to take you to your hospital appointment. If you need help with travelling, the radiotherapy staff or your lung cancer nurse specialist may be able to help to arrange transport for you.

### When will I get my radiotherapy?

Most radiotherapy is given on an out-patient basis, Monday to Friday. The radiotherapy department will try to make an appointment time to suit you. However, this can sometimes be difficult due to the high number of patients needing to be treated. If you have your own transport this will allow for more time slot options.

### How will my treatment be planned?

Your doctor will look at your test results, the type of tumour you have, where it is and whether it has spread. All this information will be carefully considered when planning your treatment. Treatment planning may involve:

- **CT planning scan** - This is a special type of scan where a number of pictures are taken. It helps your doctor to plan your radiotherapy treatment and to position the treatment machines accurately. CT planning is similar to a normal CT scan and will not cause you any discomfort.
- **Simulator** - This is a special x-ray machine similar to the radiotherapy treatment machine and is used to plan the treatment to ensure that only the area that needs treatment will actually be treated.

Your treatment may be planned using either or both of these, and it may take a few visits before your treatment is ready to start. These scanners and extra visits help the doctors have a practice run at your treatment plan before you start.



### Radiotherapy equipment

If you have radiotherapy to your lung you may be fitted for a special body cradle to keep your body completely still during treatment. The cradle is made of a soft material that moulds to your body and is designed to make treatment more comfortable. For some of the more technical treatments you may also be fitted with a special vest, which is only worn during treatment. This allows the machine to work in time with your breathing pattern. If you have radiotherapy to your brain, you may have a head frame to keep your head completely still during the treatment. Alternatively, a special plastic mask may be used to cover your head and face which helps you stay in position during radiotherapy. Some people find this can be a little claustrophobic. Speak to your lung cancer nurse specialist or radiographer if you feel this may be difficult. This equipment is not required for every type of radiotherapy and may vary from hospital to hospital.

### Radiotherapy skin markings

The radiographer will make three tiny (pinhead size) ink marks on your skin at your treatment planning appointment (they look like freckles). These are to show the radiographer where to direct the radiotherapy beams when you are receiving treatment. These are permanent and won't wear off. You will be asked for permission before this is done. If this is a concern for you, ask your radiographer if there are any alternative options.

Sometimes a permanent pen may be used to mark out the treatment area, although this option is not always available. If this happens, you will be asked not to remove these marks until the end of treatment.

If you are to have treatment to your head or neck, any marks will be made on your mask: not your skin.

### How many treatments will I need?

The number of radiotherapy treatments you need is calculated by your doctor. The number may vary from 1 treatment to 26 treatments. This will depend on factors such as your general health, and the size and location of your tumour. Each treatment is called a fraction.



## GIVING HELP AND HOPE

The charity has two aims:

**Supporting people living with lung cancer** - Working closely with lung cancer nurses, we provide information, run lung cancer support groups and offer telephone and online support. Our patient grants offer some financial help to people affected by lung cancer.

**Saving lives** - We fund lung cancer research, campaign for better treatment and care for people who have lung cancer, and raise awareness of the importance of early diagnosis. Our lung cancer prevention work helps people to quit smoking and encourages young people not to start smoking.

**Call us on 0333 323 7200 (option 2)**

This information has been taken from the following sources:  
Lung cancer—answering your questions: Radiotherapy for lung cancer 2014