

## Your Appointments

### Initial Consultation

Doctor .....

Date .....

Time .....

Location .....

### Planning Appointment

Date .....

Time .....

Location .....

### Initial Treatment Appointment

Date .....

Time .....

Location .....

## If you need medical assistance, please contact

### Monday to Friday 8.00am – 5.00pm

My Icon Cancer Centre .....

My GP .....

Health Line .....

### After-hours

If suddenly unwell [e.g. shortness of breath, chest pain] attend an emergency department or phone 000

Translating and interpreting service  
TIS National 13 14 50



Whenever possible Icon Cancer Centre [ICC] uses accredited professional interpreters when engaging with patients who find communicating in the English language challenging. ICC's cultural diversity policy ensures that cultural differences are respected and where possible incorporated into the treatment of its patients.

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Welcome and thank you for choosing  
Icon Cancer Centre (ICC)

The team at ICC are passionate about providing you with the highest quality care in a supportive environment.

Our focus is always on delivering exceptional cancer care. We do this through respecting the individual needs of our patients and using the very latest technology to treat them.

This booklet will help you understand your radiation therapy treatment and what to expect.

## Radiation therapy

Radiation therapy, or radiotherapy, is the use of radiation to safely treat and manage cancer. Radiation oncologists use radiation to eradicate cancer cells, reduce their growth or relieve symptoms of cancer.

Radiation therapy works by damaging cancer cells while limiting the impact to healthy cells. It is a painless treatment (similar to having an xray), that is localised to the part of the body being treated. ICC uses External Beam Radiation Therapy (EBRT) and Brachytherapy, both effective forms of radiation therapy.

The treatment can be delivered on its own, or in combination with other forms of treatment, such as chemotherapy, hormones and surgery.



It is commonly undertaken as an outpatient service. Treatment is usually given in daily intervals (Monday to Friday) over several weeks, allowing enough radiation to target cancer cells while providing healthy cells enough time to recuperate. A single course of radiation therapy is unique to each person and their condition. This includes the site and stage of the disease, type of disease, a person's age and general health.

Radiation therapy by EBRT does not make you radioactive, and it is safe for you to be with other people, including children, throughout your treatment.

Should you or your family members require further information about radiation therapy, please speak with one of our team members or your radiation oncologist.

## Your radiation oncology team

Your radiation oncology team consists of highly trained medical professionals, working together to give you the best care possible.

### Radiation oncologist

This is the specialist doctor who is in charge of your treatment. A radiation oncologist is a medical specialist who has specific postgraduate training in cancer diagnosis and treatment, in particular with the use of radiation therapy.

### Radiation therapists

Your radiation therapist will ensure all your daily needs are met. Together with your radiation oncologist, they will be responsible for the planning and delivery of your radiation treatment.



### Nurses

Our nurses are available to support you with the assessment and management of any side effects experienced during treatment. They also assist in referring you for additional support services and provide follow up care.

### Administration team

Our administration team schedules your appointments and assists with accounts or other queries you may have throughout your treatment.

### Allied health providers

You may require allied health referrals during your treatment. These referrals may be for providers such as dietitians, speech pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and psychologists. The provider may be available within your ICC centre, or accessed via a referral from your radiation oncologist, general practitioner or nurse.



## Radiation therapy: initial consultation

Your initial consultation is noted on the first page of this booklet. You will find information on how to get to your centre, parking and public transport options in your folder. When you arrive at your appointment please let the reception team know and bring the list of items below.

### What do I need to bring with me?

- This booklet
- Completed Registration, Medical History and Consent to Collect Information forms [unless these have already been provided to the centre]
- Medicare card, Seniors card, DVA card, or any other relevant healthcare cards
- Current referral letter from your referring practitioner [unless this has already been provided to the centre]
- All your current medications including names, doses and frequency [you may choose to bring in original packaging and scripts]
- All xrays, CTs, MRIs, bone and other radiological or nuclear medical scans/ reports you have obtained during the investigation of your medical condition
- Pathology reports for blood and histopathology tests [your referring doctor may send these directly to us or give them to you]

### Appointment times

Centres are generally open between Monday and Friday, 8.00am to 5.00pm. Appointments outside of these hours may be available if required.

If you are unable to make an appointment, please phone your centre to advise and reschedule. It is important that you do not miss your treatment appointments. Please speak with your radiation oncologist or therapist if there is an appointment you may be unable to attend. We appreciate your consideration in giving us as much notice as possible.

While our administration team will endeavour to make appointments at times that suit you, your treatment plan may require you to be flexible. Please talk to your radiation therapist and our administration team if you are having difficulty making your appointments.

# Radiation therapy: planning

## Understanding costs

In most centres an estimation of fees will be provided to you and/or your nominated person. This is intended as a guide only. While ICC takes every effort to ensure the information is correct, exact fees cannot be determined until treatment commences.

## Medicare rebate

Our centres have Medicare online claiming, which allows you to have Medicare benefits paid directly into your bank account.

## Patients under public system referral

In some instances, patients receiving treatment within the public health system may be referred to a private centre for radiation therapy. In these cases there is no cost to the patient. Please note that this arrangement is determined between state and territory governments and ICC.

## Chronic Disease Management Plan

You may be eligible to receive Medicare benefits for allied health services (such as dietetics, physiotherapy or psychology) through a Chronic Disease Management Plan. To access this, you will need a referral from your general practitioner.

## Patient Assisted Travel Scheme

The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme supports patients who require travel and accommodation to attend appointments and treatment. The program provides financial support or an escort.

Each state has their own scheme, with varying subsidies. You can view these online at [ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au](http://ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au) or phone your local health department to obtain further information. Please see below for useful contacts.

Radiation therapy planning is the first step in creating your treatment plan. At this appointment we review your personal medical history to determine the most appropriate way to treat you. This appointment may take two to four hours.

The first part takes approximately 40 minutes. A radiation therapist will collect you from the waiting room, and may ask you to change into a gown before they take you into the simulation room.

Once you are changed, your radiation therapist will talk to you about the simulation session and answer any questions. During this session your radiation therapy treatment position will be identified.

Your treatment position is often determined using a CT scanner, which identifies the cancer and surrounding structures. This

enables our team to localise the areas you are having treated. Extra equipment may be required to identify a specific position. As this position needs to be accurately reproduced throughout your treatment you may require very small permanent and/or non-permanent marks to assist with this process. Any marks needed for your treatment will be fully explained during your planning session.

Your radiation therapist or nurse will discuss how to care for your skin during radiation therapy and suggest appropriate clothing to wear during treatment. They will also advise any specific requirements needed for your treatment, for example, whether you must have a full or empty bladder.

A member of our team will also complete an assessment of your falls risk.

## Useful contacts

Australian Government Department of Human Services (Medicare)  
[humanservices.gov.au](http://humanservices.gov.au)  
132 011

Rural and Remote Health Australia  
[ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au](http://ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au)  
1800 020 103



## Radiation therapy: treatment

When you arrive each day for your appointment, please check in with our reception team

One of our nurses will talk about your radiation treatment with you. You are welcome to bring a family member, friend or carer to be part of this discussion. The nurse will talk to you and provide written information about the management of your skin, as well as possible side effects resulting from your treatment.

The side effects from radiation therapy are localised to where treatment has occurred, and differ between treatment sites as well as individuals. Some people notice minimal side effects while others may experience them early or late in their treatment.

Common side effects of radiation therapy include localised skin irritation, such as dryness and itchiness, and overall fatigue.

For a list of possible side effects, please see the frequently asked questions on page 11.

Side effects typically start after the second or third week and may progress throughout your treatment. Most will continue for a short time, gradually improving four to six weeks later.

Before treatment commences, a radiation therapist will discuss your treatment providing an explanation of the process and what to expect, including time frames. Following this you will be provided with a complete list of appointment dates and times. Should you have difficulty attending your appointments, please inform your radiation therapist.

### What to expect during your treatment

Radiation therapists are responsible for delivering your treatment. You will lie in exactly the same position that you were in at your radiation therapy simulation appointment. The radiation therapists will ensure your exact position is replicated each day. Treatment set-up usually takes about 5-10 minutes and is often longer than the treatment time itself.

Once you are positioned, you will need to stay as still and relaxed as possible. The radiation therapists will let you know when they are exiting the room; you will be closely monitored at all times. There are



microphones present if you need to speak with your radiation therapist.

A CT scan or xray may be taken before commencing your treatment to ensure you are correctly positioned. Once it commences, the treatment may only take a few minutes. The machine is operated from the control area outside the room. Your therapist will stay outside the room until your treatment is completed. You will not feel or see the radiation during your treatment, but you will hear the machine operating. It is important that you remain still until you are told that you can move.

Regular reviews will occur throughout your treatment sessions. This is to ensure the treatment is progressing and allow for any

changes. Nurses will regularly check in with you to see how you are feeling and provide information and support on side effects you may be experiencing.

### Follow up appointments

In your final week of treatment, the administration team will organise a follow up appointment with your radiation oncologist or another specialist. Please ensure you have this appointment scheduled prior to leaving on your last day.

# Frequently asked questions

## Does radiation therapy make you radioactive?

External beam radiation therapy does not make you radioactive, and it is perfectly safe for you to be with and around other people, including children, throughout your treatment.

## Can I miss a radiation therapy treatment appointment?

Your individual radiation therapy treatment plan has been carefully calculated, so it is important that you do not miss any appointments. However, if missing an appointment is unavoidable, please discuss this with your radiation therapist as soon as you can.

## Will I lose my hair?

Radiation therapy is a local treatment, meaning it only affects the area of the body where the radiation is targeted. Unless your radiation treatment is targeted at an area where hair grows, such as your scalp or face, you will not lose your hair. People having radiation therapy for breast cancer may find their underarm hair will fall out if it is near the radiated area, however it will grow back in time.

## Can I drive after treatment?

Yes, it is safe for you to drive after you receive radiation therapy treatment. However, if you feel unfit or unwell to do so, please advise a team member immediately.

## Will radiation therapy affect my fertility?

This again depends on where you are having treatment. If you are a woman having radiation therapy to the abdomen or pelvis, the amount of radiation absorbed by the ovaries will determine the potential impact on your fertility. Radiation to the pituitary gland may also influence fertility, as the pituitary gland normally signals the ovaries to ovulate. Radiation to both testes in men is rare, however if you require this therapy your fertility may be affected. Please speak with your radiation oncologist should you or your partner wish to become pregnant, or if you have fertility concerns.

## Does radiation affect pregnancy?

It is important you are not pregnant or become pregnant at any time during radiation therapy, as xrays for positioning can harm the foetus. If you think you may be pregnant at any time, it is extremely important to discuss this with a member of the radiation therapy team. If you wish to become pregnant after your treatment please discuss this with your radiation oncologist prior to commencing.

## Can I father children during radiation therapy?

For men having radiation therapy to their pelvic region, it is advised that you do not father children during treatment. Radiation therapy may damage your sperm, which can lead to birth abnormalities. If you wish to father children after this treatment, please discuss this with your radiation oncologist prior to commencing.

## What are the side effects of radiation therapy?

People who receive radiation therapy may experience skin dryness, itching, blistering, or peeling. These usually resolve a few weeks after treatment has finished. A common side effect is fatigue, a feeling of exhaustion that does not improve with rest. Your level of fatigue may depend on whether you are undergoing other treatments, such as chemotherapy. Although most side effects go away after radiation therapy has finished, some long-term effects may occur.

As radiation therapy is localised to an area of the body, you may only experience side effects in this area. Your radiation oncologist and treatment team will discuss the type of side effects you may experience, however it is important to advise of any effects you notice.

## Will I feel nauseated?

If you have radiation therapy to your abdominal region, you may get an upset stomach and feel nauseated. This will usually resolve when your course of treatment is completed. If you notice you are feeling nauseated for a prolonged period of time, please inform our team so we can suggest ways to manage this.

## Does radiation therapy hurt?

Radiation therapy is painless during treatment. You will not see or feel the radiation, but you may hear noise from the equipment. Please tell the radiation therapist if the position is causing you pain or is making you feel unwell.

## How long does radiation therapy treatment take?

Radiation therapy is scheduled over an extended period of time, usually from weeks to months, enabling sessions to be as short as possible and for healthy cells to recover. A treatment session may only last 15 to 20 minutes, however you may need to attend other appointments, such as seeing your radiation oncologist at the conclusion of treatment.

# Our commitment to quality service

## ICC is committed to ensuring a safe environment during your visits to our centres

### Certification and quality improvement

All of our centres are certified to the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS), which are governed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare. ICC has a commitment to continuous improvement in the quality and safety of all aspects of our service. We appreciate any feedback our patients provide and encourage you to do so by speaking with a member of our team or in writing.

### Equipment

Our centres have the latest in radiation therapy technology and equipment, from the linear accelerators that deliver external beam radiation to the computer software that assists in planning your treatment.

### Medical Physics

ROC medical physicists are responsible for commissioning, calibration and quality assurance of the machines, as well as associated equipment used during your treatment. They perform quality assurance on the planning systems and ensure that a high level of accuracy is maintained at all times.

### Falls prevention

We aim to make our centres as safe as possible for patients and visitors. We are committed to reducing the risk of falls by raising awareness of what may cause a fall and providing techniques to assist in prevention. An assessment of your falls risk will be completed by a member of our team during your planning appointment. This will ensure our team members are aware of your needs and can work with you to agree on strategies that reduce your risk.

The assessment of your falls risk covers mobility, medications, falls history, vision, mental status and bowel and bladder symptoms. The assessment is repeated during your treatment to ensure it remains current and is addressed at all times.

Prevention strategies may be implemented, including the use of mobility aids, review of your medications, monitoring you during your attendance at our site or referrals to allied health services. Carers can assist by ensuring that you understand and support the falls prevention strategies.

To prevent a fall please ensure you:

- Ask for help
- Take your time getting up from sitting or lying down
- Let staff know if you feel unwell or unsteady

- Use the correct walking aid for your needs (walking stick or frame)
- Always wear well-fitting shoes with a non-slip sole
- Wear your glasses if you need them

The strategies above can also be implemented at home. Other actions you can take at home include checking your home for hazards, good lighting, using a lamp or torch for night time movement, gentle regular exercise to help maintain balance and safe walking, managing your medications and taking them as directed.

### Infection control

ICC is committed to preventing and controlling healthcare associated infections. We follow a range of procedures to reduce the risk of infection, such as:

- Washing hands with soap and using antiseptic hand rubs
- Maintaining a clean environment
- Wearing gloves, gowns, masks and goggles (when required)
- Using sterile equipment
- Staff vaccination programs

There are a number of things you can do to reduce the risk of infections. The best way to prevent infections is to:

- Wash your hands carefully with soap and water or use an antiseptic hand rub, which is available throughout our centres

- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- Report any infections you may have
- Care for your wound dressings as instructed by your nurse, if applicable

Cleaning your hands is identified as the best way to prevent the spread of infection. You should clean your hands before touching or eating food, after you have gone to the toilet, after sneezing or coughing, before touching your eyes, nose or mouth and before or after touching your dressings.



# Rights and responsibilities

It is important that you remain informed of all aspects of your treatment and care

The following guidelines have been adopted to ensure that you are aware of your responsibilities and that your rights are preserved.

## Right to appropriate, quality healthcare

You have the right to safe, high quality healthcare, where standards of professional excellence are maintained at all times. You have the right to be informed of all aspects of the healthcare service provided to you, including the extent of insurance coverage for services and supplementary costs.

## Access to care

You have the right to impartial access to treatment regardless of race, creed, sex or national origin.

## Right to respect and dignity

You have the right to courteous, considerate care with respect for your feelings, personal privacy, dignity, cultural and religious practices at all times.

## Privacy and confidentiality

Any collection of information relating to your treatment is done in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles, Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act 1988. You have the right to be interviewed and examined in surroundings designed to assure reasonable visual and auditory privacy. You should expect consultation and discussion regarding any aspect of your care to be conducted in total confidence, and not to be released without your written consent unless considered medically necessary in emergency circumstances.

## Right to adequate information

You have the right to obtain, from the practitioner responsible for coordinating your care, complete and current information concerning investigations to be performed, diagnosis [to the degree known] and the nature and risks of the proposed treatment. Information will be communicated to you in terms you can be reasonably expected to understand. You may request the names and roles of key staff involved in your care.

## Consent

You have the right to give or refuse consent based on adequate information to any anaesthesia, surgical procedures and unusual medications, participations in any research project, photographic and audio-visual recording and other procedures where consent is required by law.

## Second opinion

You always have the right to seek a second opinion. It is the responsibility of you or the person responsible for your care to arrange this.

## Refusal of treatment

You have the right to refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law. You have the right to refuse the presence of health workers not directly involved in your care

If you have any concerns regarding your care please speak with one of our team members immediately. They will ensure your feedback is escalated to the appropriate person who will respond to your complaint. If you feel you have not received an adequate resolution, you can contact the relevant state body for health complaints. A list of all state bodies are located on the Australian Government Department of Health website - [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)

## Your responsibilities

You are responsible for advising your radiation oncologist if you do not understand any aspect of your care, including your condition and the purpose of your treatment before you agree to that treatment.

You should know your own health history and provide to the best of your knowledge, accurate and complete information about present complaints, past illness, hospitalisations, medications and other matters relating to your health.

We ask that you follow the treatment and care plans recommended by the health practitioners, keep appointments and inform the centre when you are unable to attend.

We expect you to be considerate of the rights of other patients and team members. Smoking is not permitted at any ICC centre by patients or staff.





# Privacy Policy

## ICC is committed to providing quality healthcare for all patients

As a healthcare provider in the private sector, ICC respects your privacy and adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles, Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act 1988.

The Australian Privacy Principles set the standards by which we handle, collect, use, distribute and store personal information collected from our patients.

A copy of the Australian Privacy Principles can be found at [comlaw.gov.au](http://comlaw.gov.au)

### Health information

As part of our commitment to providing quality healthcare we maintain files containing information concerning your health history. This information in the medical record or file, is at all times the property of ICC. The following types of information are maintained:

- Personal details such as your name, address, date of birth
- Medicare card number
- Your medical history

- Past and present medications prescribed to you
- Notes made during the course of medical consultations
- Referrals to other health service providers
- Results and reports received from other health service providers

Health information is generally collected by the treating doctor during the course of the consultation. Ancillary health information may also be disclosed to specialist doctors and allied health providers that you see in order to continue your healthcare.



### Disclosure

Ordinarily we will not release the contents of your medical file without your consent. However there may be occasions where we will be required to release the details of your file irrespective of whether you consent to the disclosure of the information given. This occurs where the law requires disclosure. Some examples are:

- There is a serious threat to an individual's life, health and safety
- There is suspected unlawful activity
- There is a specific requirement by law, for example, when served with a subpoena or other court order
- It is reasonably necessary for a range of functions or activities carried out by or on behalf of a law enforcement body
- You are physically or legally incapable of giving consent and the disclosure to a person responsible for you is necessary to provide appropriate healthcare or treatment, or for compassionate reasons and this is not contrary to any prior wish or wish of which the responsible person is aware

### Access

As a client of these centres, you have general rights of access to any information we hold concerning you. Please note there are exceptions, which we are happy to discuss with you. Should you wish to access this information please contact our administration team.

### Handling and storage of health information

As part of our commitment to preserving the confidentiality of the information contained in your medical record we want to confirm that strict secure storage policies are observed in this practice. Each member of our team understands the importance of doctor-patient confidentiality.

### Confidentiality

Medical files are handled with the utmost respect for patient privacy. Your file will be accessed by the medical practitioner, and when necessary, for example in the absence of your usual medical practitioner, by other medical practitioners in the practice. It may also be necessary for our team to handle medical files from time to time to address the administrative requirements of running a medical centre.

ICC team members are bound by confidentiality requirements as a condition of employment. They sign strict confidentiality agreements upon commencement of employment that remain in place during and after employment with our centres.

These confidentiality requirements will always be observed if it is necessary for our team to view your records.



Your Treatment Guide

# Radiation Therapy

## Your Details

Name

.....

Doctor

.....



[iconcancercentre.com.au](http://iconcancercentre.com.au)

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