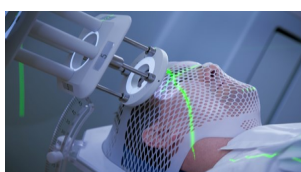


# EXTERNAL BEAM RADIATION THERAPY

This information sheet has been written to provide answers to some questions you may have about Radiation Therapy. Each topic tries to answer your probable questions.

## RADIATION THERAPY



### WHAT IS RADIATION THERAPY?

Radiation therapy can be given from outside the body (external beam radiation) or from within (brachytherapy) or by injection and oral tablets (radionuclide therapy).

The treatment we give here is mostly External Beam Radiation Therapy (EBRT).

EBRT is a treatment in which an x-ray beam, coming out of a machine called a linear accelerator, is aimed specifically at the site of the cancer. The x-rays damage the DNA (genetic code) in the cancer cells, and this damage then results in the death of the cancer cells.

Radiation therapy is planned to treat as little of the normal body as possible. You do not feel the radiation as it is being delivered.

Treatments are usually extended over a period of weeks, which allows the normal cells to recover between successive treatments. Treatment prescriptions can vary (depending on the needs of the individual) but are usually 25 treatments delivered over 5 weeks.

## ONCOCARE TREATMENT TEAM

Your radiation treatment will be given at Oncocare located at No 1 Walmer Drive, corner Enterprise Road in Newlands Harare. Oncocare is a partnership between Baines Imaging Group and many other players. You will meet various members of the Oncocare team during your visits.

The following is a brief description of who we are and what we do.

**Radiation Oncologist** - a specialist doctor who is qualified in the treatment of cancer by radiation

**Therapy Radiographers** - qualified technical professionals involved in the planning, scheduling and delivery of the treatment on radiation and support equipment.

**Medical Physicist** - a scientific officer who performs regular checks to ensure the safety of radiation equipment and treatment plans. The physicist also makes certain that all radiation safety guidelines are implemented and followed.

**Registered Nurse** - a nurse that has completed their training and has advanced knowledge of caring for cancer patients. The nurses, along with the radiation therapists, will advise you on how to look after yourself while you are on treatment.

## TREATMENT PLANNING

In order to deliver the treatment accurately and at the correct dose, we need to be able to locate the exact area to be irradiated in relation to the surrounding normal tissues. This process is called treatment planning.

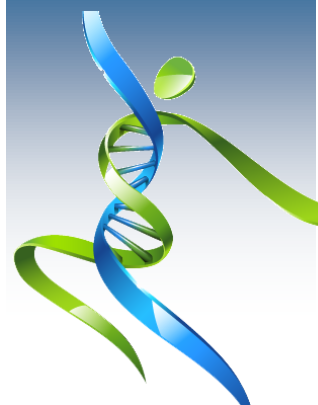
CT scan of the area to be treated will be done first. Small permanent tattoo marks will be made on your skin to assist in the daily set-up for treatment. Using the information obtained

during the CT we calculate the best method of giving a dose of radiation to the treatment area, whilst at the same time avoiding as much normal tissue as possible.

Measurements are recorded and checked routinely throughout the course of treatment to ensure the treatment is accurately delivered. The treatment beam can be delivered from various different directions in relation to the area to be treated.

## Outline:

- > WHAT IS RADIATION THERAPY?
- > ONCOCARE TREATMENT TEAM
- > TREATMENT PLANNING
- > TREATMENT DELIVERY
- > DOCTOR CLINICS
- > POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS
- > DIET, EXERCISE & REST
- > FOLLOW-UPS
- > CLINICAL RESEARCH



## Contact Us

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Harare, Zimbabwe

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Fax: +263-8677004556

E-mail: [info@oncocare.co.zw](mailto:info@oncocare.co.zw)

## RADIATION THERAPY



## EXTERNAL BEAM RADIATION THERAPY

### Oncocare Treatment Team (continued)

**Receptionist/Scheduler-** these people will help you with scheduling your appointments, and will be able to discuss your account details.

**Pharmacists-** prepares and dispenses prescribed medications

**IT specialists-** see to the connectivity and upkeep of the information and communication systems

**Engineer –** This is a person that has trained on the operation and maintenance of the equipment.

The therapy radiographers, nurses and staff members work under the direction of the resident radiation oncologist, who works in liaison with your oncologist. We aim to give you the best possible care during your treatment, any one of us at Oncocare is willing to answer any question you may have.

## Patient Information

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## TREATMENT PLANNING

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## TREATMENT DELIVERY

After the planning process, time is required to complete the planning calculations, this can be a few hours up to five days from the time the CT Scan is done. Treatment is started as soon as possible following the completion of this process.

Treatment is usually given once a day, five times per week, with the exception of public holidays. Depending on the complexity of

your treatment, you will spend about 10-30 minutes in the treatment room where the linear accelerator is housed. Plan to spend between 30-60 minutes within the center each day.

### DOCTOR CLINICS

You will be seen in a review clinic while you are on

treatment. Clinic days and times are specific to each doctor and every effort will be made for these times to coincide with your treatment times.

It is not necessary to wait for your visit with the doctor, if you have any concerns. The therapy radiographers will assist you if you need further, immediate management, they will have you seen by the relevant personnel.



## POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS

The radiation, you are receiving for treatment also affects the normal tissues of the body, and this can cause side effects. However, we know that normal tissues are better able than cancer cells to heal the radiation damage, and most of the normal tissues will recover.

Side effects depend on:

- the amount of radiation given
- the area of the body treated
- individual response

With improvements in technology, including modern planning systems and treatment delivery methods, the side effects of External Beam Radiation Therapy have been reduced remarkably. However, some people may be affected to some extent and the severity of the side effects varies from person to person. There can be "acute" (short term) or "chronic" (long term) side effects.

### Acute Side Effects (Short Term/Early)

These are side effects that occur during the treatment course and usually take a few weeks to resolve after completion of treatment. At the beginning of the course you may notice little change, except perhaps, some tiredness. At about half way through and then increasing toward the end, the acute side effects may appear.

### Fatigue

General tiredness, may occur during and after the treatment course. Most people are still able to work and only take time off for the daily appointment, but others may find it too tiring and prefer to stay at home. In general we suggest you keep to your normal routine until your body tells you otherwise. If the problem persists or becomes

severe, please inform a member of the treatment team.

### Skin Reddening and Irritation

The timing of the skin changes depends on the course of treatment prescribed. Your skin, in the treatment area may become red, dry, or itchy throughout the treatment course, you will be given a skin care instructions sheet on commencement of treatment.

### Chronic Side Effects (Long Term)

Most people return to 'normal' after completion of their treatment, but a few may experience some long-term side effects.

The peak of any reactions/ side-effects you may experience will occur approximately 7-14 days after the completion of your radiation treatment. This is due to the cumulative nature of the treatment.

## DIET AND EXERCISE

- It is recommended that you keep up your fluid intake while on treatment (i.e. 6-8 glasses of water per day).
- You should maintain a well-balanced diet and continue with your usual level of physical activity.
- Mild exercise e.g. walking for 30 minutes three times per week has been shown to be beneficial in dealing with the fatigue associated with radiation therapy. However, it is important that you listen to your body and do not over exert yourself.

- Getting plenty of rest each day facilitates the normal body tissues to recover from the effects of the radiation therapy.

## FOLLOW -UPS

At the completion of treatment, an appointment will be made for you to have a follow-up visit with your oncologist. The interval between finishing treatment and this appointment varies depending on the area you are having treatment.

## CLINICAL RESEARCH

Medical professionals at Oncocare study the nature of disease and try to develop better methods of diagnosis and treatment (clinical research). In the discussion of your treatment, your doctor may invite you to participate in clinical research, should they be any, if you are interested and eligible, but it is not compulsory.



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## Further Information

You are encouraged to keep in touch with your oncologist. Should you need anything from the staff at the center, or have questions you may use the following phone numbers:

04 776009-10, 086 77004556, 0774 395 048 or simply walk into our center.

You may also reach out to us on our website or on social media platforms:



Oncocare is here for you, caring for you is our priority.



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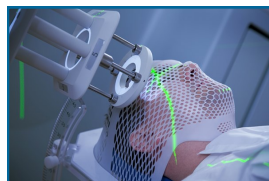
## About Oncocare

Oncocare Zimbabwe is established to Provide high quality, comprehensive cancer care, through a fully integrated, multidisciplinary and cost effective oncology delivery system.

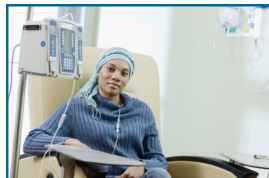
We aim to reduce incidence, morbidity and mortality of Cancer. We will achieve excellence in research, education and community outreach.

## Services

### Radiation Therapy



### Chemotherapy



### Diagnostics and Screenings

