



Réseau de  
cancérologie  
Rossy

Rossy  
Cancer  
Network

# Your Radiotherapy Journey at the Jewish General Hospital

## A Guide to Preparing for Your Treatments



**A patient-friendly book for:**

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This booklet is provided to help you understand and prepare for your radiotherapy treatments. Share it with your loved ones and bring it with you throughout your treatment. Write any questions down on the last page of the booklet and ask us at your next appointment.





# Table of Contents

## What is Radiotherapy?

What is Radiotherapy? .....	4
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## Your Journey

Your Radiotherapy Journey .....	5
Your First Appointment .....	5
CT Simulation .....	6
Treatment Planning .....	7
First Treatment Session .....	8
Treatments .....	9
Regular Checkups .....	10

## Treating Team

Introducing Your Treating Team .....	11
--------------------------------------	----

## Side Effects

Possible Side Effects .....	13
-----------------------------	----

## F.A.Q

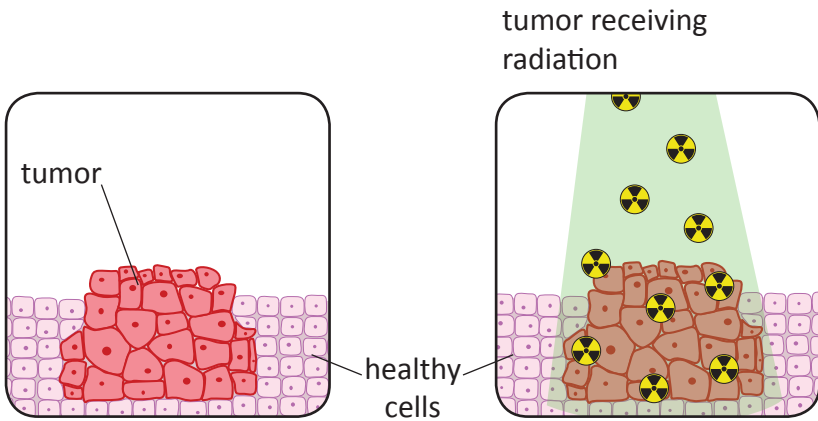
Frequently Asked Questions & Who to Ask .....	14
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## General Information

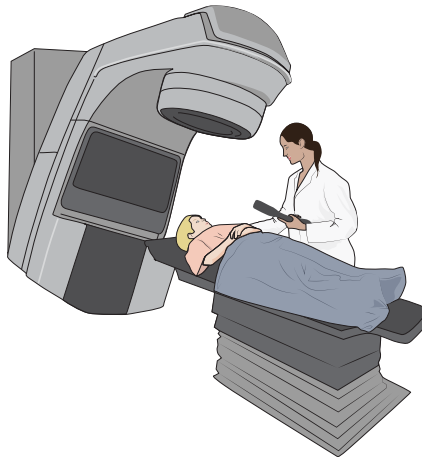
Telephone Numbers & Helpful Resources .....	16
Checklist: Keeping Track of Documents .....	17
Your Notes .....	18
Hospital Map .....	19

# What is Radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy is the use of high-energy x-rays to treat cancer.



Our body is made up of many types of cells. Each cell works in its own way to keep us healthy. Cancer forms when a group of cells start to grow out of control.



Radiotherapy works by using high doses of x-ray radiation to kill cancer cells. Radiotherapy is given only to the part of your body that needs treatment. The x-ray radiation is produced by a large machine similar to the one shown in the picture above.

# Your Journey

## Step 1: Your First Appointment

Your radiotherapy journey begins with your consultation with your radiation oncologist.



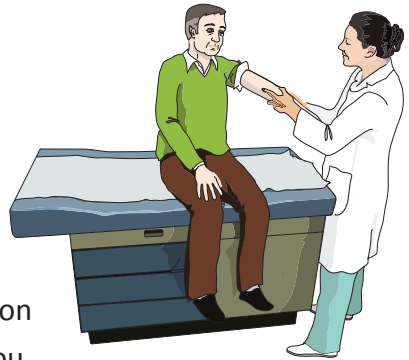
Your radiation oncologist is:



Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

Your radiation oncologist will:

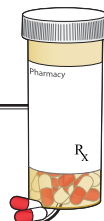
- Review your medical history
- Perform a physical examination
- Review any results of tests you have had



Your radiation oncologist will also explain your treatment plan, including the:

- Number of treatments \_\_\_\_\_
- Frequency of treatments \_\_\_\_\_
- Length of each treatment \_\_\_\_\_
- Possible start date \_\_\_\_\_
- Preparation for treatment and possible side effects

Please bring a list of any medications that you are taking to this appointment.

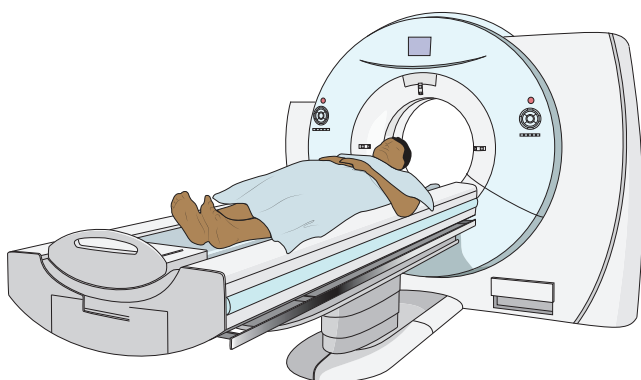


# Your Journey

## Step 2: CT Simulation

Once you and your radiation oncologist have decided on the best treatment plan for you, the next step will be a CT simulation scan.

The CT simulation is a scan of the part of your body that will be treated with radiotherapy. You will be scanned in the position that you will be in for your treatments. The purpose of the CT simulation is to provide your treating team with pictures of your body. They will use these pictures to plan your treatment.



During your CT simulation, your radiotherapy technologists may use special equipment to help position you in a way that can be repeated for each treatment.

The technologists may mark your skin with tiny tattoos (smaller than a freckle). These tattoos are permanent and will be used as reference points during your treatments.

### Step 3: Treatment Planning

Your radiation oncologist will prepare your treatment plan (the technical aspects of your treatments) with a team of health professionals. They will use your CT simulation scan and other information about your disease to do this.



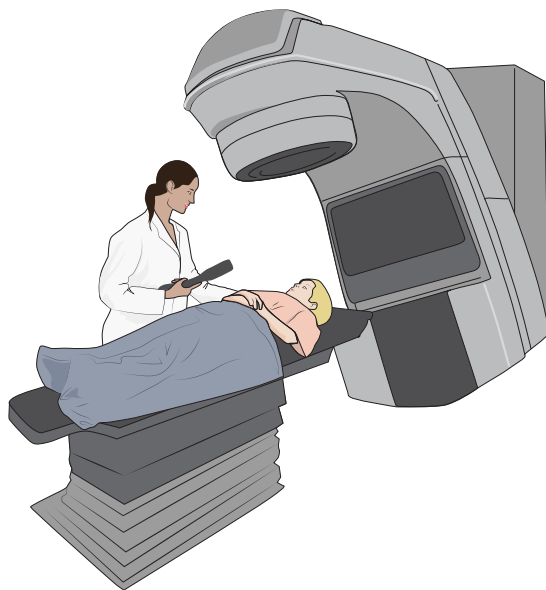
You should expect a delay between your CT simulation and the beginning of your radiotherapy treatment. This is normal. Be assured you will start within a time that is acceptable for your particular situation.

**When your treatment plan is ready you will receive a phone call to schedule your treatments.**



# Your Journey

## Step 4: First Treatment Session



Your first radiotherapy session will be the longest. Your radiotherapy technologists will position you in the same way you were at your CT simulation. They will take x-ray images to check your position.

The technologist may use a marker to draw lines (called marks) on your skin to outline the treatment area. These marks are not permanent. Please do not wash them off.

If you are marked by your technologist, please do not erase the marks, they are not permanent.

Each day when you arrive for treatment, please check in by scanning your card at a barcode scanner. If you are unsure how to check in, please ask at the reception desk.

Radiotherapy does not hurt.  
You will not become radioactive.



### Step 5: Treatments

The final number of treatments will be decided by your radiation oncologist based on your needs.

Most patients receive one treatment per day (Monday to Friday) for several days to weeks.



Your daily treatments will be similar to your first treatment but will most likely take less time. Most of the time is spent verifying the information and positioning you correctly.

During your treatments you will be alone in the treatment room.

Your technologists will be watching by video camera. They can hear you, and can speak to you by intercom when needed.

**Feel free to speak to your technologists if you have any questions or concerns.**

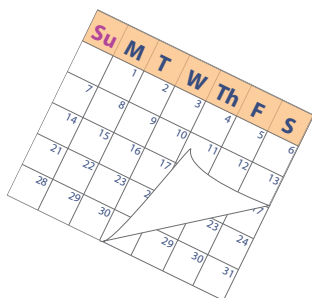
If you can not make a treatment for any reason, please call the receptionist at 514-340-8111

# Your Journey

## Step 6 : Regular Checkups

Over the course of your treatment you will be seen regularly by your radiation oncologist to check your progress.

Your regular check-up is a good time to ask your radiation oncologist your questions. We suggest that you write down your questions and bring them to this appointment.



You will be seeing your doctor on:

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## Treating Team

During your radiotherapy journey, a team of healthcare professionals will work together to ensure that you receive the best possible care. You may meet members of this team throughout your radiotherapy journey.

Ask your team any questions that you might have.

**They are here to help.**



### **Your Radiation Oncologist**

Your radiation oncologist is the doctor who is responsible for your radiotherapy treatment. He or she will discuss your treatment with you and monitor your progress. If needed, your radiation oncologist may change your treatment to make it as effective as possible. Through all the steps of your radiotherapy journey, he or she will work closely with the rest of your treating team to make sure that you receive the best possible care.

### **Radiation Oncology Nurses**

The radiation oncology nurses can listen to your concerns, answer your questions, provide support, and manage your treatment side effects. They are available before, during, and after treatments, until you have fully recovered from all side effects. They can also link you to resources in the hospital and the community.

### **Radiation Oncology Technologists**

Radiation oncology technologists work at the radiotherapy planning and treatment machines. They see you daily, help set you up in the same position as the CT simulation, check your marks and give you your treatments. They can answer most of your questions and are a link with the other members of your treating team.

# Treating Team

## Medical Physicists

Medical physicists are scientists who are trained to understand how radiation interacts with your body. They are responsible for the safety of your radiotherapy treatment. They also take care of the radiotherapy machines to make sure that they meet the highest national and international standards for accuracy and safety.

## Dosimetrists

Dosimetrists are specialized radiation oncology technologists who plan your radiotherapy treatment using the pictures taken during your CT simulation scan. They work together with your radiation oncologist and with the medical physics team to create a computerized treatment plan that is just for you.

## Nutritionists

A clinical nutritionist may meet with you, depending on your treatment plan. They will help you make any changes to your diet during treatments if needed.

## Social Workers

Social workers are there to support you and your family during your radiotherapy treatments. They can provide counselling and can help arrange other supportive services.

## Receptionists

The receptionists are most likely the first people you will meet when you come to our department. They can assist you with check-in, booking appointments, forms and parking passes.

## Volunteers

Volunteers are there to help make your visits to the hospital more comfortable. They are usually in the waiting room. They will be happy to help guide you and find the right person to answer your questions or concerns.

**Note: If you are hospitalized for any reason please call 514-340-8111 to inform your treating team.**

## Side Effects

You may or may not experience some side effects during your treatment. This is normal. Your radiation oncologist will discuss with you what to expect.

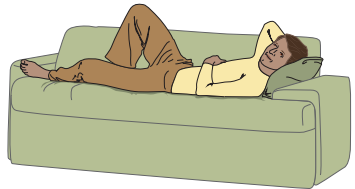
### **What type of side effects can I expect?**

Side effects are related to the area of the body that is being treated. Common side effects may include fatigue and skin irritation. You will receive more information for your particular case at the time of the CT simulation scan.

If you have not received additional information, please ask us.

**If you are having any side effects during treatment please speak with your treating team. Most of the side effects can be controlled or improved with medication.**

- Most side effects are temporary. They can start at any time during your treatment and improve in the weeks after the end of your treatment.
- Some side effects may start after your treatment is finished.



### **Will I feel tired?**

Radiotherapy can make you feel more tired than usual. Listen to your body and rest if needed. If you are able, continue your normal activities. Some people are able to continue working, others can not. If tiredness is a problem, tell your radiation oncologist, nurse or technologist.

Ask us your questions,  
we are here to help!

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Can radiotherapy affect my lifestyle?

During your radiotherapy treatment, you can perform most of your daily activities. Mild physical activity such as walking is encouraged and may be helpful. If you go out into the sun, make sure you are well protected (proper clothing). Once you start treatment you should try to avoid missing treatments for any reason. You should not plan to go on vacation until your treatments are complete.



### Does the treatment hurt?

Treatments do not hurt. You will not feel anything during the treatment.

### Will I be radioactive?

Radiotherapy will not make you radioactive and you can safely be around other people, including children.

### How will my doctor know if my treatment is working?

Your doctor will meet with you regularly during your treatment to evaluate your progress. The radiotherapy may not produce an effect until after all your treatments are finished.

### Will I be able to wash or shower as normal?

It is very important not to wash off the marks, but it is OK to have a bath or shower. Use a mild soap and pat dry your skin, do not rub it. Do not shave the area that is being treated. Do not use cream right before your daily treatment unless instructed otherwise.



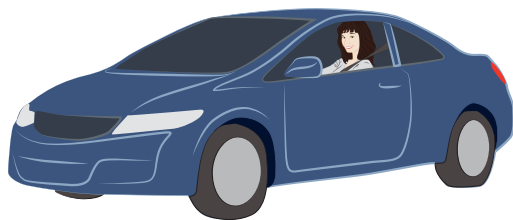
## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Will I need a special diet?**

Depending on the part of your body that is being treated, it is possible that you will require a special diet. If this is the case, you will be sent to a nutritionist in the Department of Radiation Oncology who will make a diet plan for you. If you have any questions, you can ask for an appointment with our dietician.

### **Transportation**

There may be resources in your community to help with transportation. If this is a concern, please ask to speak with a social worker.



### **Parking**

There is a reduced parking fee for patients who come for **daily** radiotherapy treatments. Please ask at the reception desk.

### **Insurance papers**

Please let the receptionist know if you have any insurance papers that need to be filled out.

### **What happens when all my treatments are finished?**

When all your treatments are finished, you will be given a follow-up appointment with your radiation oncologist. You can also call us if you have any side effects or require further assistance.

## Resources

Radiation planning and treatments occur in the basement level of Pavilion G (G-18)



Receptionist G-18 basement ..... (514) 340-8111

Doctors or doctor's secretary (G-002) ..... 514-340-8288

Radiation oncology nurses ..... 541-340-8222 ext 4124

Dietitian ..... 514-340-8222 ext. 5888, or 4503

Social worker in radiation oncology ..... 514-340-8222 ext 5310

Hope & Cope -- is an organization that supports patients and their families. Working under the supervision and guidance of professional staff, our cancer experienced volunteers can help you at any stage of your cancer journey.

..... 514-340-8222 ext 2591

Supportive care Team specializes in pain and symptom control for patients with advanced cancer. .... 514-340-8222 ext 3617

Patient representative ..... 514-340-8222 ext 5833

JGH patient and family resource centre ..... 514-340-8222 ext 2438 or 5930 [jgh.ca/pfrc](http://jgh.ca/pfrc)

(514)340-3616

4635 Côte-Sainte-Catherine Road

Wellness Centre ..... <http://www.jgh.ca/en/wellness>



## Your Checklist

**Your Radio Oncology information kit should include:**



- ☐ Recommendation to follow during the treatment (given at CT Sim-Scan)
- ☐ Canadian Cancer Society Radiation Therapy Guide
- ☐ Quebec Oncology Passport
- ☐ Hope & Cope Information sheet

**You may also need:**

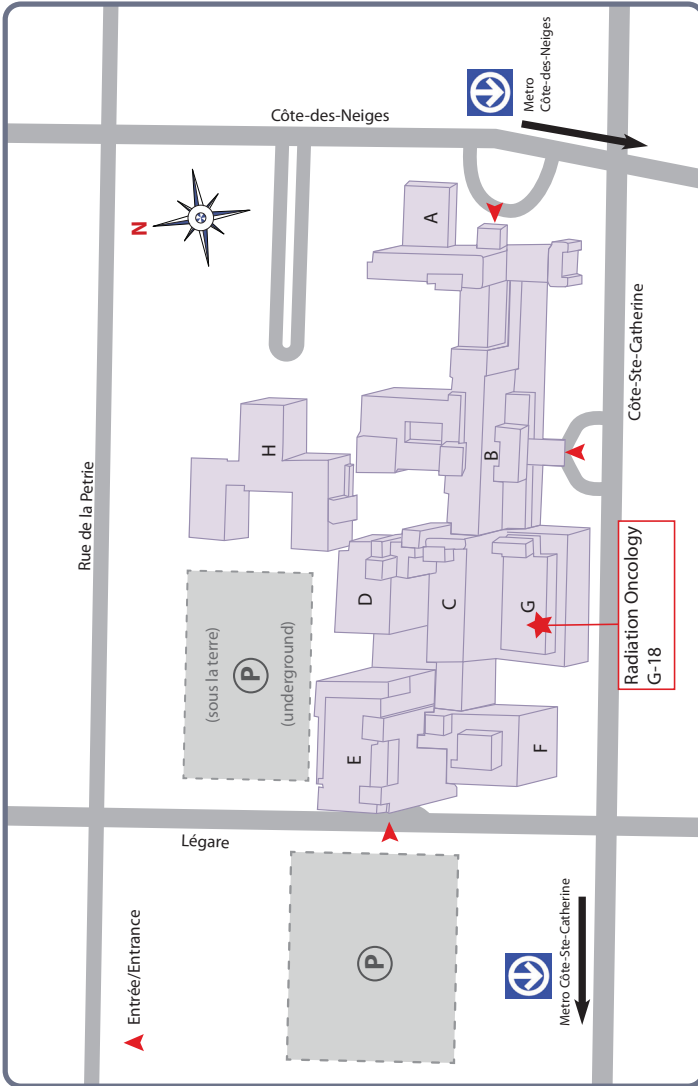
**Where do I get it / Who do I ask?**


Parking pass .....	Receptionist
Insurance/work forms .....	Receptionist
Transportation form .....	Radiation Oncology Social Worker
Special diet information .....	Radiation Oncology Nutritionist
Hospital map .....	Available on the last page of this booklet

## Your Notes



# Hospital Map




  
 Hôpital général juif
   
 Jewish General Hospital
   
 3755 Rue Côte-Sainte-Catherine Road
   
 Montréal, QC H3T 1E2

This document was prepared by the Rossy Cancer Network in collaboration with the:

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### **IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ**

Information provided by this booklet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional health care practitioner, or to substitute for medical care. Contact a qualified health care practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.



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Hôpital général juif  
Jewish General Hospital



Centre hospitalier de St. Mary  
St. Mary's Hospital Centre



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Jewish General Hospital [www.jgh.ca/en/radiationOncology](http://www.jgh.ca/en/radiationOncology)

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