

A red laser light effect with a bright central point and horizontal and diagonal beams is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the slide.

Preparing for Radiation Therapy

Radiation Oncology Department
Valley Health Cancer Center

Objectives

- Learn about the role of radiation therapy in the treatment of cancer
- Guide you through the process from simulation to every day treatment
- Introduce your radiation therapy care team
- Familiarize you with the support available from the cancer program team
 - Front Desk – Karen Zaleski and Ann Anderson
 - Insurance/Pre-Authorization/Benefits/FMLA – Diana Haack
 - Social Services and Support Groups – Caroline Trenary
 - Dietitian/Nutrition – Athena Hall
 - Navigation – Lindsey Temple and the Nurse Navigation Team
 - Integrative Care Services and Wellspring – Jennifer Hudson

Online Patient Portal

- Allows access to medical records/treatment history
- See upcoming appointments

Sign up with Karen or Ann at the front desk after class for this service.

Insurance Benefits

- Pre-authorization for radiation procedures
- Benefits package
- Medical expenses
- FMLA process and paperwork
- Release of medical records

Please contact Diana Haack at 540-536-6015 for any insurance or FMLA questions.

Financial Assistance

- For financial assistance questions:
 - Email: financial.counselor@valleyhealthlink.com
 - Call: 866-414-4576
 - Mailing address: Financial Counseling Dept., PO Box 3340, Winchester, VA 22604
- For cost estimates for out-of-pocket expenses:
 - Email: estimates@valleyhealthlink.com
 - Include name, date of birth, insurance information if you have any, and procedure

Social Services and Support

What can a social worker do for you?

- Support for emotional aspect of diagnosis
- Resolve barriers
- Explore coping styles and techniques
- Partner to communicate with family/children about diagnosis
- Provide connections with support groups

Please contact Caroline Trenary at 540-536-6018

What Can a Social Worker Do For You?

Provide support to help you with:

- Emotions
- Loneliness, isolation
- Nervousness, depression, anxiety
- Changes in:
 - Appearance
 - Home, school, work life
 - Relationships
- Worries about the future
- Quality of life
- Barriers to treatment
- Questions, concerns, needs

Oncology Nurse Navigators

- Our nurse navigators offer individualized assistance to patients, families and caregivers. They work together as part of the multidisciplinary cancer team to facilitate patient centered care that addresses physical, emotional and social needs.
- Our team of highly skilled, knowledgeable registered nurse navigators are available to assist with timely access to cancer care, removing barriers to care, support for informed decision-making and referrals for available oncology resources and support services.
- The navigators can serve as an advocate for you and your family and liaison with your cancer care providers. They help coordinate appointments, talk through every treatment option and answer your questions.
- To reach a member of our Oncology Nurse Navigation team, please call 540-409-1622.

Nurse Navigation Team

Reann Harms, RN, BSN

General Oncology Nurse Navigator
540-536-6022



Lindsey Temple, RN, BSN, ONN-CG

General Oncology Navigator
540-536-5347



Amy Huck, RN

General Oncology Nurse Navigator
540-536-4055



Regina Wymer, RN, BSN

General Oncology Nurse Navigator
540-540-6017



Suzie Frederick, RN, OCN

General Oncology Nurse Navigator
540-536-1602



Nutrition

- Proper nutrition through treatment plays a key role in your healing during and after treatment.
- A healthy diet full of plant based foods and lean animal proteins should be followed during treatment.
- A dietitian can help review side effects you may be experiencing through your treatment plan of care and give you support tips on what foods to focus on.
- If you are struggling with your appetite, overall intake and losing weight due to lack of nutrition intake, please consider asking your provider to consult the Cancer Center's dietitian.

Wellspring Services

- Salon services are provided by professionals who have specific training and/or understanding of the special needs of cancer patients. Each patient is treated with compassion for the process and nurturing support of the healing journey.
 - Shampoo and haircut (complimentary for patients in active treatment)
 - Hair color
 - Manicures and pedicures, facials
 - Specialized skin care products for cancer patients
- Wig fittings and wig care (complimentary for patients in active care and chronic care patients)
- Complimentary care bags for newly diagnosed cancer patients
- Compression stocking fittings
- Custom breast prostheses and accessories
- Post-surgical breast form and bra fittings
- Post-surgical compression bras or camisoles

Services are also offered at discounted prices for friends and family. Proceeds help Wellspring continue to offer free services for people actively healing from cancer.

Wellspring, Valley Health's cancer resource center, is located at 525 Amherst Street in Winchester. Call 540-536-4981.

Integrative Care Services

Integrative care is an approach to medicine and overall health that keeps the patient in the center of all care processes and options. Rather than one practice care model, integrative health combines western medicine, eastern medicine and complementary medicine to work towards the best possible results for the patient. Valley Health's Integrative Care program is here to assist and support you in your healing process – mind, body, and soul.

Call Jennifer Hudson, Integrative Care Program Coordinator, at 540-536-8198 for more information, or talk to your Valley Health healthcare provider about which services would best support you.

Currently offered complementary care services include:

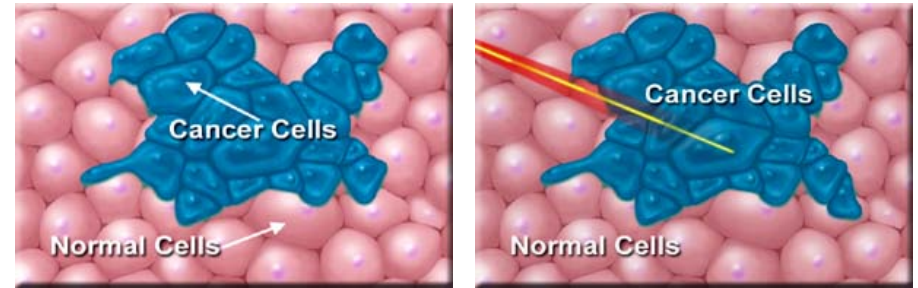
- Massage
- Reiki
- Music Therapy
- Meditation Groups
- Herbal Foot Baths
- Aromatherapy
- Sound Bath

Different Types of Cancer Treatments And/or Combination of Treatments

- **Chemotherapy** – use of chemical substances to treat cancer – systemic (whole body)
- **Radiation Therapy** – use of high energy radiation from x-rays to kill and shrink tumors (site specific). We use photon and electron energies at this center.
- **Surgery**
- **Immunotherapy** – biological therapy that uses substances to stimulate or suppress the immune system to help the body fight cancer

How is Radiation Therapy Used in Cancer Treatment?

The goal of radiation therapy is to destroy cancer cells so they stop reproducing and die. This process is designed to kill cancer cells with as little risk as possible to normal/healthy cells.



- Radiation therapy may be used alone, or in combination with other cancer treatments.
- Out of all patients with cancer diagnosis, about 50% receive radiation at some time during their care.
- We take many precautions when planning treatment to minimize risk to the surrounding healthy tissue – the amount of radiation normal tissue can safely receive is known for all parts of the body.

Your Radiation Therapy Team

Radiation Oncologist – Physician specially trained to treat cancer patients with radiation, oversees treatment plan and creates your prescription

- Dr. Bruce Flax & Dr. Kristen Kowalchik

Physicist – Checks treatment plans and maintains quality and accuracy of treatment and equipment

Dosimetrist – develops treatment plan with physician prescription and calculates precise amount of radiation to be delivered

Radiation Therapist – operates radiation therapy equipment and delivers daily radiation

Radiation Oncology Nurse – educates and monitors patient throughout treatment

Medical Assistant – assists physicians and nurses with patient care duties, promotes efficient patient flow and patient care, i.e., exams and procedures



From Beginning to End

- Consult with your radiation oncologist
- Simulation
- Begin treatment
- End treatment
- Follow-up visits to monitor progress

Simulation

- Simulation (mapping) is how we gather the data necessary to build your radiation treatment plan.
- This consists of putting you in the reproducible position you will be in for all of your treatments and then acquiring a CT scan in this position.
- You may get permanent tattoo marks which help us align you when you begin treatment.
- On this day you will receive your appointment for your first treatment.
- However you are positioned in simulation, that will be how you are treated, as we need to replicate this position every day. If anything is overly uncomfortable, we will need to know at the time of simulation.

Simulation Room

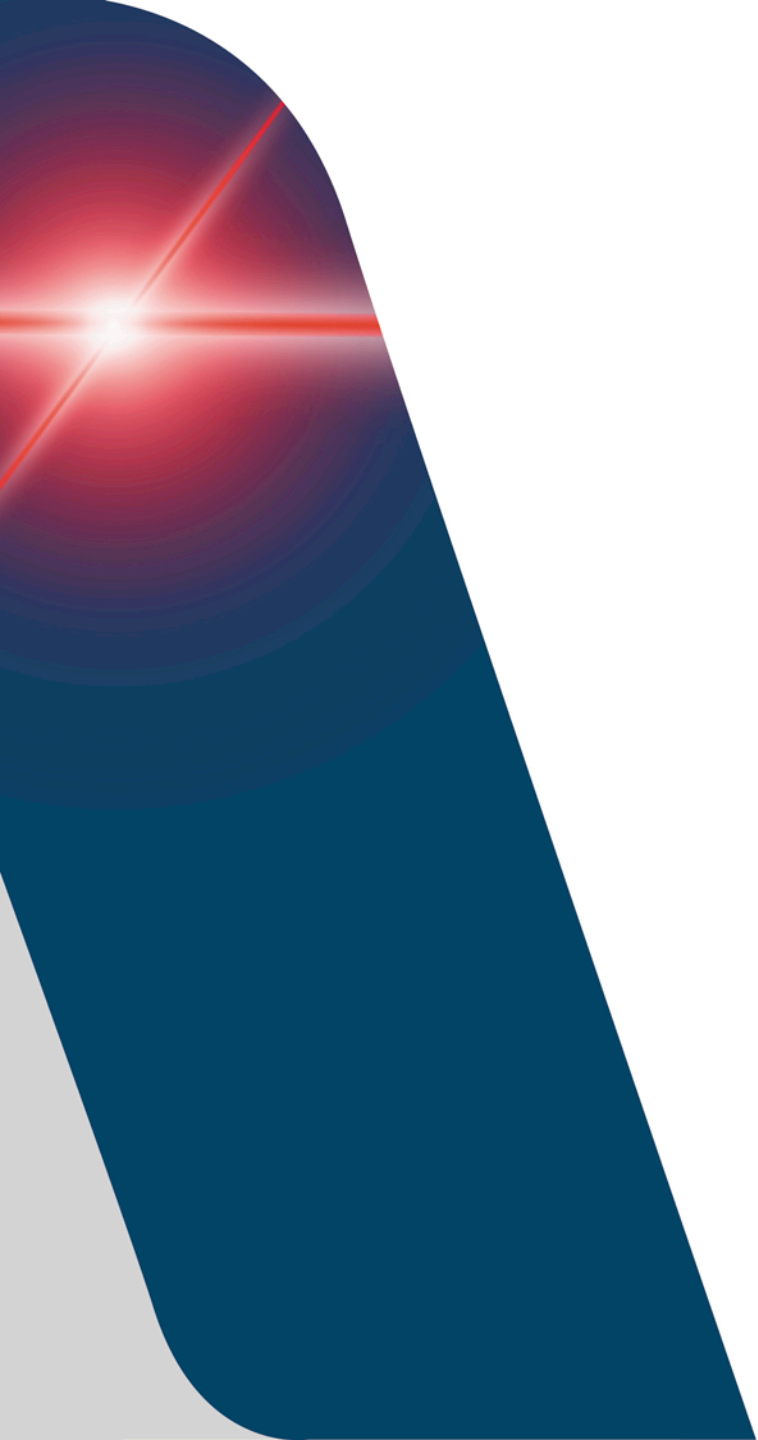


Treatment

- Treatment is delivered by a machine called a linear accelerator. We have two identical machines.
- You will be alone in the room during treatment, but we have cameras and speakers and can see and hear you at all times.
- Treatment times vary but generally last 15 minutes or less – this includes setup; the actual time you are receiving radiation is generally a few minutes.
- The treatment itself is painless, much like an x-ray.

Treatment

- The first day can be slightly longer because we need to take X-rays first that need to be seen and signed off by the physician before treatment.
- On the first day of treatment, you will be given your daily treatment times by your therapists. This appointment time remains the same throughout treatment.
- You will see the nurses and the doctor weekly during your active treatment. These on treatment visits, or “OTVs,” will be your longer days (typically 15-30 minutes longer). You will receive your treatment first, then check in with the nurses and then see your physician. You may be asked to adjust your appointment time slightly on these days.



Completion of Radiation

- Once you have completed your radiation, you will be discharged by our nursing staff and they will set up a follow-up visit.
- The radiation continues to work for a few weeks after you have completed your radiation. So, your follow-up visit is scheduled 1 month after completion.
- On this visit, your physician will review any side effects you may be experiencing and answer any questions you may have.

Frequently Asked Questions Answered

- Treatments are Monday-Friday, typically between 7AM and 3:30-4PM.
- Our new start appointments are typically always between 2-3pm Monday-Thursday. This appointment time will only be for your first visit. You will receive your everyday schedule on your first day of treatment.
- Since we do not start new patients on Fridays, if you have an appointment time after 2:00PM, your time may be moved up slightly.
- Your radiation therapists will create and manage your daily schedule. We are constantly starting and stopping patient treatments, so there is not a choice in time, but we will work with you as best we can to accommodate requests.
- If you have a conflicting appointment, we will work with you to try and accommodate. Generally we ask that you tell us the day before, as our schedule is always changing. (Example: if you have chemo)

Frequently Asked Questions Answered

- We do not usually close because of weather. In the event we have inclement weather you can call our main phone line for updates on hours.
- Side effects are site specific if you are to experience any. Side effects vary from person to person. Potential side effects for your specific treatment will be listed on your consent form, of which you will receive a copy.
- Why does it take so long to begin treatment? The plan takes time to create. The prescription must be written, the plan created and checked by our physics team, and insurance pre-authorization needs to come back. All of this can take up to 2 weeks for a regular treatment.
- You may receive a scan/bloodwork to check progress. but this varies with cancer type/location, and it would be at a future follow-up visit.