



Hôpital général juif  
Jewish General Hospital

## Radiation Oncology

2009



This guide was prepared by the nursing staff of the JGH  
and the volunteers of Hope & Cope.

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## INTRODUCTION TO RADIATION ONCOLOGY

This kit was prepared for you, the patient, and for your family so that all of you can better understand what is happening now and what lies ahead. Our aim is to inform you about and help you with your treatments in order to make your stay with us as pleasant as possible.

We will try to accommodate your lifestyle and responsibilities as best as we can. The following information will help you understand the treatments you will receive, what happens while you are in the department, and what services we can provide for you.

The department is divided on two floors.

- (1) Ground Floor, Room G -002, Telephone: **(514)340-8288**.  
Consultation, follow-up and visits with the doctor.
- (2) Basement, Pavilion G, Room G-18, Telephone **(514)340-8111**  
Planning and treatment

Here is the description of the steps you will follow during your treatment in Radiation Oncology.

### 1) CONSULTATION

Your first visit in our department is to meet with the Radiation Oncologist. He will review your chart to see if radiation treatments would be beneficial in your case. He will then examine you and explain what kind of treatments we can offer you. Should you agree to undergo these treatments; an appointment will be made to "plan" them.

Your doctor will inform you as to your approximate waiting time until your treatment begins. If you have not heard from the department within this time frame, please call **(514)340-8111**.

### 2) PLANNING

Planning your treatment involves taking measurements and making marks on your skin with special ink so that your daily treatments can be given precisely where the doctor wants. This is done here in the department, by a technologist under the direction of your doctor. X-rays along with the treatment plans are sent to the physics department where a plan is made specifically for you. It will take a few days for this to be completed. You should start your treatments approximately one to two weeks after your planning appointment. We suggest that you wear cotton over the area to be treated and that you wear old clothing over the area where the ink marks will be made, as these tend to stain clothing upon contact.

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### 3) PRIOR TO TREATMENT

The technologist who will be giving you your treatments will call you with an appointment time. The technologist will try to make this as convenient as possible for you. However, you may have to start your treatments at a given time until your preferred time slot is available. Plan to be in our department 30 minutes. You will be in the treatment room around 15 minutes and the treatment itself only takes a few minutes. You should arrive 10 minutes ahead of your appointment. Sometimes you may find that you have to wait even though you are on time. This is due to unavoidable delays earlier in the day and we apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause.

You will receive an information sheet with side effects specific to the location of your treatment. If you have not received one, please ask us for one.

### 4) TREATMENT

The treatments are given by a technologist every day except Saturday, Sunday and statutory holidays. Your Radiation Oncologist may make some adjustments during the course of your treatment, which will be explained to you. You may therefore, receive a few more or a few less treatments than originally prescribed. Your doctor may also order some other tests or procedures so that we can give you the best treatment possible. You will be advised in advance if any of these are prescribed and how much time these tests or procedures might take.

The number of treatments you will receive depends on the area to be treated, the nature of the disease and other factors your doctor will take into consideration.

The effects of radiation therapy are local. Only the outlined (planned) area is treated. This means that any side effects you may have will also be local. Not everyone experiences side effects. We stress that you not wait for your assigned day to see the doctor to mention any change or side effects that may occur. If you *do* have side effects, please see the nurse. Most of these can be controlled or alleviated with medication and should be dealt with as soon as they happen.

Your technologist will send you to the clinic area of the department to see your doctor once a week during your treatments. On those days, plan on being in the department 15 to 30 minutes longer. You may need to have blood tests drawn during the course of your treatment. The technologist will send you to the nurse on the appropriate day after your treatment, should this be necessary. The treatments themselves will cause you no pain. You will be lying on an X-ray type table and your treatments will be like having an X-ray taken.

You will not be radioactive as there is no radioactive source left in your body after each treatment.

### 5) FOLLOW-UP

You will be scheduled for a follow-up appointment with your doctor in Radiation Oncology approximately one month after completion of your treatments. However, if you experience side effects or have any concerns do not hesitate to **contact the Radiation Oncology Nurse at (514)340-8111 or (514)340-8288.**

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## **RADIATION ONCOLOGY CLINIC**

### **GROUND FLOOR PAVILION G**

Receptionist: (514)340-8288

**Always bring your Medicare card and your RED Hospital card.**

1. The first stop at the clinic is with our receptionist in room G-002, ground floor. She will prepare your chart in addition, take your Medicare card.
2. You will see the doctor according to your appointment time, not on a first-come, first-serve basis.
3. The Radiation Oncology nurse would like to meet you during your first visit. She can give you information, answer any of your questions, and would like to get to know you. If you did not meet the nurse on your first visit and would like to speak with her, please call (514)340-8288 OR 340-8111.
4. There is also opportunity to link up with team members such as the dietician, social worker, nurse or another resource such as Hope & Cope. Hope & Cope volunteers are available to you in the clinic and in room E-730.1 on the 7th floor of Pavilion E; the phone number is **(514)340-8255**, or at the Radiation Oncology clinic **(514)340-8222**, local **5888**.

We urge you to use all the various resources available; they are there for you.

#### **(1) Radiation Oncology Doctors**

The Radiation Oncologists see patients in the Radiation Oncology Clinic for assessment and treatment. In case you experience any of the following symptoms on weekends or evenings, come to the Emergency Room of the hospital:

Temperature over 38°C (100.5°F) taken by mouth (it is always a good idea to have a thermometer at home before you actually need it; digital thermometers are available at your neighborhood pharmacy).

Chills and shivers

Bleeding and bruising

Severe or persistent pain

Shortness of breath, persistent cough or hoarseness

Difficulty in walking

While on treatment, if you notice any of the following symptoms, telephone your nurse from Monday - Friday, 8am– 4pm. Do **not** wait until your next visit:

Blood in urine or stool

Exposure to chicken pox and any contagious disease

# Swelling of hands, feet or eyelids, or skin rashes

# Persistent dizziness or blurred vision

Changes in menstrual cycle or flow

Skin reactions

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## **(2) Radiation Oncology Nursing Staff**

Your Radiation Oncology nurses work full-time and can be reached at **(514)340-8288 or (514)340-8111**. Please leave a message if they are not available, and they will get back to you as soon as possible.

The nurses can assist the patient and family with the following:

- 1) Information about radiation treatment and the disease process;
- 2) Assistance in managing side effects (i.e. nausea and vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhea, skin reactions) and pain control;
- 3) Emotional support to the patient and family members;
- 4) Referrals to hospital and community resources as needed e.g. social worker, dietician, Hope & Cope, referrals to C.L.S.C. for home visiting and/or home help.

**Consult the nurse/doctor/pharmacist BEFORE TAKING ANY NEW MEDICATION.  
Make a list of all medication that you are taking, and always carry the list with you.  
Don't hesitate to ask about any other medication.**

## **(3) Radiation Oncology Technologists Basement - Pavilion G-18 Tel: (514)340-8111**

The technologists work closely with your doctor and nurses and are responsible for planning and administering treatment as prescribed by your doctor. They provide information and can also give support and recommend resources.

## **(4) Supportive Care Team (SCT) Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Tel: (514)340-8222, Local 3617**

The team specializes in pain control, symptom control (nausea, vomiting, constipation, etc.), and emotional support for patients and families affected by a diagnosis of cancer, particularly those dealing with advanced disease. The S.C.T. keeps contact with patients by phone when they are at home, and sees patients in the oncology clinic and in the hospital. The team is made up of a clinical nurse consultant, a family physician, a liaison social worker, and representatives from Hope & Cope, psychology and psychiatry, the pharmacy, and the Victorian Order of Nurses (V.O.N.). Your Radiation Oncology doctor or nurse can refer you to this team.

## **(5) Dieticians**

For patients who are actively undergoing Radiation Oncology treatments and are experiencing side effects, the dietician is available 3 days per week, from 8:30 am-4:30 pm. Patients with certain types of cancer are seen automatically. These include rectal, prostate, endometrial and head and neck patients. **Please speak to your technologist or the nurse if you would like to make an appointment to see the dietician.**

Patients who are well nourished tolerate cancer treatment better and seem to recover more quickly from treatment side effects. The dietician will provide individual counselling to assess dietary needs of patients and to help patients maintain good nutrition and health status.

**# Attention Breast Cancer Patients: Before changing your diet and incorporating SOY based  
# products, consult your health care professional.**

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**(6) Social Work Department**

**Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Tel: (514)340-8240**

The social worker's role is to help provide for the emotional, familial and physical needs of patients and families who are affected by a diagnosis of cancer. Their counselling role coupled with the use of resources available in the hospital and community, is geared towards enhancing the strengths of each individual or family as they cope with the stresses created by cancer.

**(7) Hope & Cope**

**Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Tel: (514) 340-8255**

Hope & Cope is a psychosocial support program for those dealing with cancer. Volunteers who have experienced cancer, either their own diagnosis or that of a family member or friend, provide a wide range of comprehensive and accessible services. A list of Hope & Cope resources is available in this kit.

**(8) Patient Representative**

**Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at (514) 340-8222 local 5833**

A Patient Representative (ombudsman) is available to you and your family, in case you have problems or questions, or if you require assistance. The availability of a Patient Representative is in accordance with the Act Respecting Health & Social Services (Bill 120).

The Patient Representative also acts as a resource person, or as a liaison in situations, which require mediation between patients and health care providers. In addition, patients' concerns are discussed at various hospital committees, dealing with such topics as research ethics, clinical ethics, and quality of care.

**KEEP IN TOUCH**

**If you are hospitalized for any reason during your treatments, please contact the Radiation Oncology Team at (514) 340-8111. This will ensure that your treatments will not be interrupted, and we can continue to follow you closely.**

**NB: FOR PATIENTS WITH BREAST CANCER PLEASE CALL US AT 514-340-8288 WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED YOUR CHEMOTHERAPY (AS DISCUSSED WITH YOUR RADIATION-ONCOLOGIST). THIS WILL HELP US PLAN YOUR TREATMENT. THANK YOU**

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