



TURVILLE BAY

RADIATION ONCOLOGY CENTER

A member of  SSMHealth.

A diagnosis of cancer can bring on a flood of emotions and concerns. At Turville Bay Radiation Oncology Center, we strive to care for patients and their loved ones while treating the disease. Radiation alone, or in combination with other cancer treatments, can successfully treat many different types of cancer. Our team of professionals is dedicated to tailoring a treatment plan to meet your medical needs in a non-institutional setting. Staff is always available to answer questions, help ease anxieties, and offer comfort.

Scheduling Your First Appointment

When your primary care physician or other specialist refers you to our clinic, our patient scheduler will contact you to set up the initial consultation appointment. A packet of informational material and health-related forms will be sent to you prior to the appointment day. It is important that the forms be filled out completely and brought to the consultation. Interpreters are available but must be scheduled in advance. Referring physicians send pertinent medical records to our clinic, but you should bring any medical records in your possession, a list of medications, insurance information, and referral forms with you on the day of your consultation.

Consultation with a Radiation Oncologist

No matter what type of radiation therapy you receive, your treatment begins with consultation. Most patients are referred to radiation oncology by other specialists who have done tests to determine if cancer is present and at what stage. The consultation appointment takes about 1-2 hours and gives you the opportunity to meet with one of the radiation oncologists (a physician specializing in the treatment of cancer with radiation) and learn about your treatment options.

Before meeting with the doctor, you will meet with a nurse who will take your pulse, blood pressure, weight, and health history. You'll learn what you can expect from radiation treatment, including possible side effects. Then the consultation with the Radiation Oncologist will begin. He or she will take the information you bring with you, review your medical history with you, and perform a physical examination. The radiation oncologist may communicate a great deal of information in a short period of time. Family members or significant others are encouraged to accompany you on this visit. It may be useful for you to bring a prepared list of questions. It may also be helpful to have another person to take notes and ask questions. To comply with current health care standards, Turville Bay



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“...AT TURVILLE BAY RADIATION ONCOLOGY CENTER I FELT LIKE I WAS BEING TREATED AS AN INDIVIDUAL, NOT JUST ANOTHER NUMBER.”

-FROM A RECENT PATIENT SURVEY

does not allow the use of recording devices or cameras on its property. Protected health information (including pictures) should never reside on a personal portable device. Your privacy is important to us.

After the examination, the doctor will discuss your treatment options (including benefits and risks) and give his/her recommendations. If you decide that radiation treatment is right for you, a treatment planning CT scan and/or simulation will be scheduled.

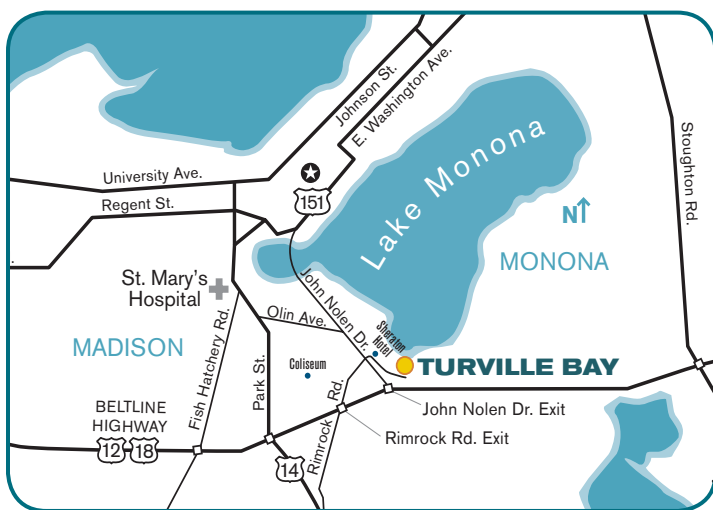
Simulation/Treatment Planning

The simulation/treatment planning appointment, which takes about one hour, is required to properly plan your radiation therapy. To be most effective, radiation therapy must be aimed precisely at the same target each time treatment is given. The process of measuring your body and marking your skin to help safely direct the beams of radiation occurs during the CT simulation.

Images are taken to determine the precise area to be treated. We do this with the help of a CT Scanner. The CT scanner does not deliver the radiation treatment. During the CT simulation, your radiation oncologist and radiation therapist(s) position you on the CT scanner in

the exact position you will be in during actual treatment. Because positioning is so important for your treatment you may have a custom mold, mask, or headrest made. These immobilization devices help you remain in the same position during the entire treatment. Depending on the area treated, your physician may request that you receive IV contrast or barium to drink. Contrast is used to highlight organs so that they can be seen on X-ray or CT images. When imaging is complete, the therapist will either place a temporary mark on your skin and cover it with protective tape or give you small permanent tattoos (very small black dots). These marks are sometimes placed on your customized immobilization device. The marks will be used to position you each day for your radiation treatments. When this appointment is complete, you will be given an appointment to begin your course of treatment, usually one to three weeks after the CT appointment.

During the days following your 2nd appointment, images obtained from the CT scanner are transferred to a sophisticated treatment planning computer system where a virtual three-dimensional image is created and the treatment plan is developed. This step takes place even though you are not in the radiation oncology department. The planning team (radiation oncologist, dosimetrists, and medical physicists) custom designs the best treatment plan for you. This process can take a couple of days or up to three weeks depending on the complexity of the plan. After reviewing all of your information and your treatment plan, your doctor will write a prescription that outlines exactly how much radiation you will receive and what parts of your body will receive the radiation. The final step in the simulation and planning process is the verification simulation. This is done on the treatment machine. If temporary marks were used, they will be replaced with tattoos. Each patient is different and each treatment plan is unique – verification of all treatment parameters ensures that you are ready to start your treatment.



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Your Treatment

It is not unusual to feel anxious on the first day of treatment. We hope you will share your concerns with us. We are here to answer your questions. During treatment, you will lay down on the treatment table in the same position as your initial set-up. The radiation therapists will use the tattoos that were placed on your skin (or immobilization device) during the CT simulation to position you correctly. The therapists will then leave the room and go into an adjoining control room. Images are taken regularly and then reviewed by your doctor to ensure proper positioning. They do not show disease. Therapists constantly monitor you with audiovisual technology while administering the radiation. You can communicate with the therapist if you have any concerns. Radiation therapy is usually given on a structured schedule over the course of several weeks or months. Most patients receive 4 or 5 treatments each week for several weeks. Although treatments are scheduled for 15 or 30 minutes, you will receive radiation for only a fraction of that time. Much of that time is spent on positioning. Patients do not feel anything during the radiation treatment is painless.

Radiation works best when it is given in small doses over several sessions. In this way, it can destroy the tumor cells and yet allow sufficient time for the normal healthy cells around the tumor to repair any damage from the radiation.

Radiation therapists are always available to answer questions. You will meet once each week with your nurse and radiation oncologist for assessment of your progress and for you to express any concerns. Please inform the radiation oncologist of any new symptoms if they arise. The side effects of the radiation depend on the exact type of tumor treated and the location of the radiation treatment.

Managing Side Effects

Many people encounter varying issues due to radiation therapy. Skin changes, fatigue, diarrhea, or trouble eating are perhaps the most common. Side effects vary from

person to person and depend on the type of radiation dose and the area of the body being treated. Early side effects (those occurring early in treatment) may include skin changes, fatigue and hair loss. Most side effects go away with time once treatment is complete. Tell your radiation therapist and radiation oncologist about your issues, as there may be ways to reduce discomfort.

For a list of suggestions for managing side effects visit our website and talk with your healthcare providers about what is happening to you.

After Treatments are Complete

After your treatments are complete, a follow up appointment will be scheduled so that your radiation oncologist can make sure your recovery is proceeding normally. Follow-up care is aimed at assessing the disease status and managing side effects. Your radiation oncologist may also order additional lab work, X-Rays, and other diagnostic tests. Reports on your treatment may also be sent to the other doctors helping treat your cancer. As time goes by, the number of times you need to visit your radiation oncologist will decrease. However, you should know that your radiation oncology team will always be available if you ever need to speak to someone about your treatment.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is radiation therapy?

Radiation therapy is a treatment for cancer, used in more than half of all cancer cases. In radiation therapy, high-energy rays are used to destroy cancer cells in your body. The radiation is delivered by a special machine called a linear accelerator or by radioactive substances that are implanted or injected. We use the most advanced computer planning and treatment delivery systems to precisely deliver the radiation. Your safety is of paramount importance to us. Follow-up care is aimed at assessing the disease status and managing side effects.



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What is a Radiation Oncologist?

The Radiation Oncologist is a physician who specializes in using radiation to treat cancer and some benign diseases. During your consultation the Radiation Oncologist discusses treatment options and advises on the best treatment for you. The Radiation Oncologist works closely with other cancer specialists and health-care professionals involved in your care and meets with you on a regular basis to check on the status of your treatment.

How does radiation therapy work?

Radiation therapy works by damaging the DNA in the cancer cell, thereby disabling the cancer cell from reproducing and growing. The cancer cells then die and the cancer shrinks. The most common form of radiation therapy uses multiple beams of high energy x-rays focused on the tumor from several directions. A machine called a linear accelerator is used to generate the x-ray beams.

Will I feel the radiation or will it hurt?

No, external beam radiation treatments are painless, like having an x-ray taken. Most likely, you will not feel anything during the daily radiation session.

Will I become radioactive?

External beam radiation does not cause you to become radioactive, and you pose no risk of radiation exposure to people near you. If you have a radioactive implant in place, some visitors, such as pregnant women and small children, will not be allowed to get too close and visiting time may be limited or restricted until the implant is removed. Your doctor or nurse will tell you when these precautions are necessary.

Are there risks involved with radiation therapy?

The radiation used to damage or destroy cancer cells can also damage normal cells. When this happens, you may experience side effects. However, the risk of side effects is usually outweighed by the benefits of killing cancer cells. The Radiation Oncologist will carefully monitor any side effects.

What are the typical side effects of radiation therapy?

The most common side effects of radiation therapy reported by patients are fatigue and skin irritation at the site of treatment. Other side effects depend on the area of the body being treated and the dosage being given. Dry or sore mouth or throat may occur when treatment is being given in the mouth, throat or neck area. Some coughing and excess mucus production may occur if treatment is given to the lung area. Mild nausea and/or diarrhea may occur if treatment involves the abdominal area. Most of these side effects will subside within 4 to 6 weeks after treatment is completed. Some long-term effects may include changes in the color and elasticity of skin in the treatment area. Discuss any concerns you may have about side effects with the radiation oncologist and ask about medications to counteract them.

Will the radiation therapy make me sick?

You will not experience any nausea with radiation therapy, unless the area being treated with radiation is around the intestines/stomach. If you experience nausea, report this and any other symptoms to your doctor. Effective medications exist to reduce and/or prevent your symptoms.

Will I lose my hair?

Hair loss only occurs in the area that is being treated with radiation therapy. For instance, if the area being treated is your arm, you can expect to lose the hair on that arm during treatment. You will not lose the hair on your head unless that is the area being treated.

How long will my radiation treatment take?

Most of the time, external beam radiation is delivered in daily treatments, or fractions, over a period of 1 to 7 weeks. You will generally receive these treatments Monday through Friday, and then have the weekend off. Your daily appointment will take about 15-30 minutes.



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Who will administer my radiation treatments?

A doctor who specializes in radiation therapy is called a Radiation Oncologist. The Radiation Oncologist will prescribe the type and amount of radiation treatment that is appropriate and work closely with a team of healthcare professionals in determining the best way to deliver that treatment. Those healthcare professionals may include the following: Radiation Physicists are experts who make sure the machines are working properly and that they deliver accurate radiation doses. The Physicist also works closely with the doctor in planning your treatment. Dosimetrists are specialists who work with the doctor and Physicist to create the treatment plan and calculate the radiation dose delivered to the tumor and the surrounding normal tissues. Radiation Therapists are professionals who position you and operate the machines to deliver the radiation treatment on the linear accelerator. Radiation Oncology Nurses are caregivers who will help coordinate your care, manage side effects, and help you and your family learn about your disease.

Can someone come to my treatments with me?

Friends or family are welcome to accompany you to your treatments. However, federal regulations prohibit anyone who is not a patient or a person wearing a film badge monitor to be in the radiation controlled area during the time radiation equipment is being operated. Those accompanying you will likely be asked to remain in the waiting room during the treatment. This also serves to protect the privacy of other patients. Only patients and staff are allowed in the treatment area during treatment hours.

Can I continue my regular routine while undergoing radiation treatments?

You should continue with your normal routines. Most patients continue full-time occupations or leisure activities

through the course of treatments. When you feel tired, do not over exert yourself; take time to rest when needed. Try to get plenty of sleep and maintain a healthy diet.

Will I be alone during my treatments?

Because radiation effects are accumulated and radiation therapists treat many patients each day, it would be a long-term health risk for them to be in the room during the radiation treatments. To ensure that you are okay and your treatment delivery is going well, you will be in voice contact with your radiation therapists and constantly monitored by a video camera. If you should need assistance, simply tell the therapists and they will terminate the treatment and immediately tend to your needs.

Are There Any Side Effects?

Patients often experience few or no side effects from radiation therapy and are able to continue their normal routines. Be sure to talk to your treatment team about any problems you experience managing side effects. Most side effects are related to the area being treated. For example a breast cancer patient may notice skin irritation, like a mild to moderate sunburn. Patients with cancer in the mouth may have soreness when swallowing. These side effects are usually temporary. Side effects usually begin during the second or third week of treatment and may last for several weeks after your final treatment. Fatigue, which is usually mild to moderate, is the most often reported side effect. During the course of Radiation Therapy it is important that you eat a well-balanced diet and plan for adequate rest. In many cases, level of daily activity does not have to be restricted, and many patients continue to work full time during radiation therapy.

Does the clinic accept Medicare assignment?

Yes, we accept assignment.



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Whom do I call if I have questions about my insurance paying for cancer treatments prior to my first appointment?

Questions regarding your insurance coverage should be directed to our Billing Office at 608-259-4372. Hours are 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. Below is a partial list of insurance companies whose plans we participate in:

- Alliance
- Dean Health Plan
- Group Health
- Health EOS
- Medicare
- Physician's Plus
- WEA
- Wisconsin Medicaid
- W.P.S.

If you are a current patient, call and speak to the Billing Office at 608-259-4372. Hours are 7:00 am to 3:30 pm.

Whom do I call if I have questions about my account?

Specific questions regarding your account should be directed to our Billing Office at 608-259-4372. Hours are 7:00 am to 3:30 pm.



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