

Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy

You are getting stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) as part of your cancer treatment. This factsheet tells about the procedure.

SBRT sends narrow beams of radiation into your cancer. The beams can focus on a tumor of any size or shape. It causes little damage to nearby healthy cells.

Cancer care doctors use SBRT to treat patients who have cancer of the brain, head, neck, or spine. They also use it to treat some cancers where surgery is not an option.

Benefits of SBRT

- SBRT can destroy small tumors without surgery.
- SBRT is very precise. A tumor moves slightly when you breathe. SBRT's radiation beam locks on the moving tumor. It avoids nearby tissues and organs.
- With SBRT, you need only one to five treatments. Other radiation treatments may require 10 sessions or more.
- You do not need to stay in the hospital for SBRT.

SBRT Planning and Preparation

Before the SBRT treatment, you will have a planning session at Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI) in the Radiation Oncology clinic. It is on the first floor of the HCI Hospital.

The planning session takes about 1 hour. After you arrive at the clinic, you change into a hospital gown. You cannot take jewelry, watches, keys, or personal items into the treatment room. You may want to leave these items at home.

In a CT scanning room, you will lie on top of a device called the body fix bag. The bag fits your shape exactly. It makes a mold that will hold you in place for each treatment. A plastic sheet covers your body up to your neck and holds you snugly to help you keep still.

If you have trouble being in tight spaces, tell the radiation team. They can give you medicine to help you relax. The radiation team will schedule your SBRT treatments before you leave.

SBRT Treatment

You may eat, drink, and bathe normally before SBRT treatments. During the treatment, you will wear only a hospital gown. You may not wear any jewelry or watches. The radiation technician will put you into the mold from your planning session. With the mold holding you in place, the technician will take you to the treatment room and leave. Only you can be in the room when the radiation beams are on. The radiation team keeps watch on you with video and intercoms.

The treatment is painless. You may feel mild nausea if you get radiation in the belly.

The treatment takes about 1½ hours. You can go home once the treatment is over.