

When you get radiation, you need to be in exactly the same position for every treatment. This lets your care team aim the radiation right at your cancer.

In treatment planning simulation, your care team makes a device to fit the shape of your body. It holds you in the same position for every radiation treatment.

The simulation visit takes about 1 hour. You will not get treatment at this visit. Your treatments will begin 1–2 weeks later.

Before your appointment

Your rectum must be empty. If your rectum is not empty, you may have to reschedule your simulation. Buy one bottle (118 milliliters) of Fleets Saline Enema at a pharmacy or grocery store. You will need it on the day of your simulation. About 4 hours before your appointment, use the Fleets enema. Follow the instructions that come with it. Talk to your care team if you have questions about the enema.

Your bladder must be full. Please be sure to drink 16 ounces of water before your appointment. Time the drink so you finish 30 minutes before your appointment. Once you start the drink, do not urinate until after your appointment.

What happens during the simulation?

1. You check in for your appointment at Radiation Oncology on the 1st floor of the cancer hospital.
2. You will change clothes in a dressing room.
 - Take off all your clothing. You can leave your socks on.
 - Put on a gown with the opening to the back.
 - Put your clothing and belongings in a locker and take the key with you.
 - Go to the waiting area near the dressing room.
3. A radiation therapist will take you to a room that has a CT scanner and ultrasound machine.
4. You lie down on the table of the CT scanner. The table is the same as the one you will lie on during radiation treatments. It is rigid to make sure you are in the same position and you do not move during treatment.

5. The therapist puts you into position for the treatments. It is very important that you hold as still as you can.
6. The therapist makes the device in one of these ways:
 - A bag of foam goes under your feet and lower legs. The foam expands to fit your shape. The therapist holds the bag in place for a few moments until it becomes solid.
 - A bag of foam beads goes under your legs. The bag fits to your shape. The therapist pumps the air out of the bag and seals it.
7. The therapist takes an ultrasound image of your prostate or the area where it used to be. The ultrasound probe may touch your belly or the small space between your scrotum and anus.
8. The therapist puts guide marks on your skin with a felt-tip marker.
9. You get a CT scan, and then another ultrasound image.
10. You wait for 10–15 minutes while staying in the device. Your care team looks at the scans. They mark the exact spot where radiation needs to go during your treatments.
11. The therapist moves you back inside the CT scanner. Laser lights show the therapist where to put three small permanent tattoos on your body. The tattoos are guide marks to make sure your body is in the correct position when you get treatments.

After the simulation

We will set your first treatment appointment before you leave. At that appointment, your care team checks that your position in the treatment machine is exactly as your doctor planned. You will not get any radiation.

One or two days before your first appointment, we will call you to set up the rest of your treatment times. Because we have so many patients, you may not get the exact times you ask for. We will do our best to schedule times that are best for you.