

Patient Information

Breath Hold Technique for Patients Receiving Radiation Therapy for Left Breast Cancer

Radiation Therapy Department

☐ Vitalité Zone: ☒ 1B ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

Facility: Dr Leon-Richard Oncology Centre

Why do I have to practise holding my breath?

The heart is located near the left part of the chest wall. Taking a breath and holding it shifts the heart away from the chest wall and the area under treatment. You must practise this technique so you can breathe correctly during your radiation therapy treatments.

How do I have to practise holding my breath so that I'm ready for my CT simulation appointment?

1. Lie on your back.
2. Extend both arms over your head.
3. Take in a moderate breath and hold it.
4. Exhale and breathe normally for a few seconds.
 - ✓ Do this a few times a day, **every** day.
 - ✓ Take a break if you feel dizzy.

Objective: 25 seconds

Try to hold your breath for 25 seconds. You may not need to hold your breath this long during your treatments. However, if you can hold your breath for 25 seconds while practising, you won't have any difficulty during your treatments.

What happens if I can't hold my breath?

If you can't hold your breath, staff will take other steps to protect your heart. Your treatment plan will take place as planned.

During your treatments, the radiation therapists will carefully monitor your breathing with cameras and remain in contact over the intercom. If you sneeze, cough or cannot hold your breath, they will immediately stop the radiation. They will make sure you're in the correct position and then continue your treatment. The goal is to keep you safe and always administer your radiation therapy precisely.

If you have questions, please speak to the radiation therapists or to your radiation oncologist.