

## radiosurgery to the Brain

*If you have any questions, ask your physician or nurse.*

This information will help you prepare for your radiosurgery treatment.

### What is radiosurgery?

Radiosurgery is not actually surgery at all. It is a treatment that uses targeted radiation to destroy tumors. It uses 3-D planning to tailor the radiation dose to the size and shape of the tumor. The treatment machine focuses the radiation just on the area being treated but does not harm normal tissue.

### The radiosurgery team

The radiosurgery team provides care to meet your specific needs. The team includes:

- Physicians
  - Radiation oncologist
  - Neurosurgeon
- Medical physicist and/or dosimetrist who will help plan the treatment with your physician.
- Radiation therapist who will give the radiation treatments.
- Registered nurses who will provide education and help with follow-up needs.

Social workers are available if needed to help with resources. They also offer support and counseling to you and your family.

### The radiosurgery process

The radiosurgery process includes both a planning session and treatments. In some cases, the planning session and the first treatment may be on the same day. Both the planning session and treatments are done in the **Radiation Oncology Department** located in the Galter Pavilion, 251 East Huron Street, lower concourse, Suite LC-178. Garage parking is located at 222 East Huron Street, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For discounted parking, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated in the Radiation Oncology waiting area.

Please leave valuables at home, including jewelry.

## Planning session

Please arrive at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) for your planning session.

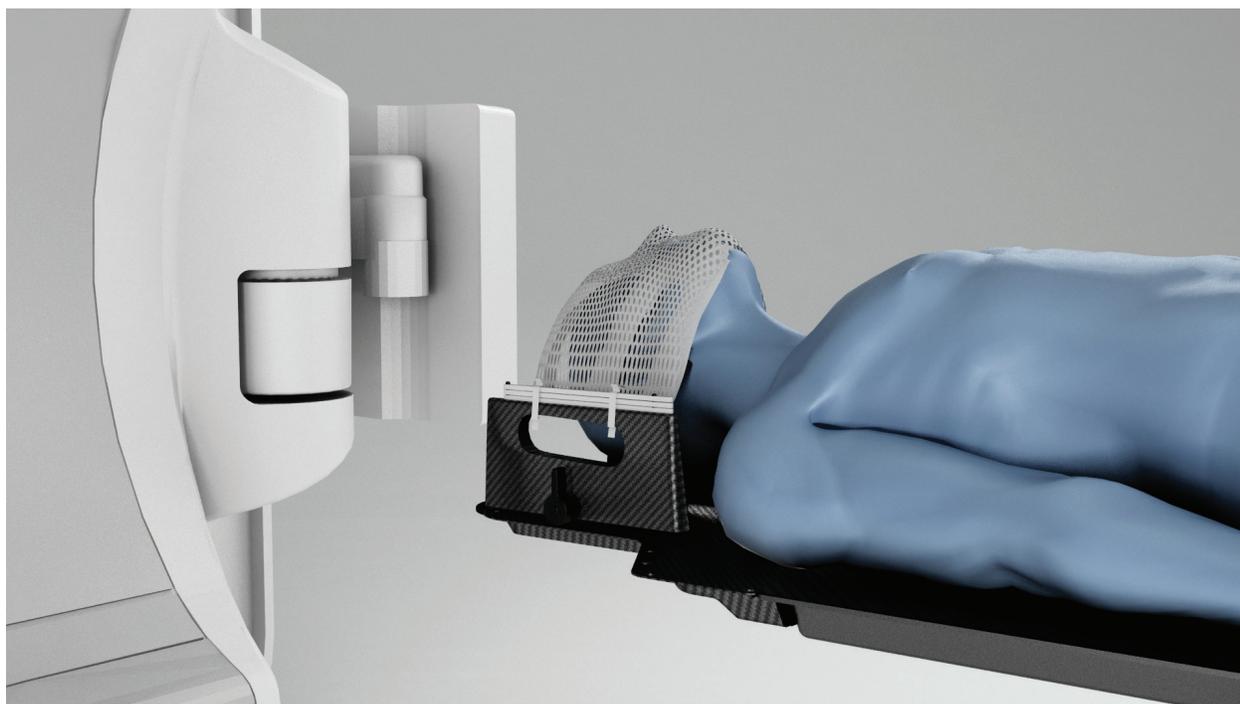
Once you have checked into the Radiation Oncology Department, you will be taken to a waiting area, where you will change into a hospital gown.

During the planning session, you will have a:

- Face mask made for you.
- Computerized tomography (CT) scan.

### ***Custom face mask***

It is important to remain still during the planning and treatment sessions. To help your head remain in the correct position, a face mask is used. This mask is custom made to fit you. It is made of a soft mesh material that will be wet, and placed on your face and neck. The therapists will mold this to your face shape, and then you will lay for 30 minutes while the mask forms. ***Tell your physician if you have pain or trouble breathing when lying flat on your back or if you are claustrophobic.***



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### ***CT scan***

Once the mask is made, the CT scan will be done to locate the tumor. This helps determine where the radiation beams will focus during your treatments. A special dye (contrast) may be used during the CT scan. If we do use contrast, we will tell you if you may eat or drink before the planning session. After you arrive, an IV (into the vein) line will be placed, and you may have blood drawn.

Tell your physician if you are:

- Allergic to contrast dye.
- Currently taking oral medicines for diabetes.

***If you think you will have trouble lying in one position for a long time, let us know. The entire CT planning session lasts about 1 to 2 hours.***

Depending on the location of your tumor and information the physician needs, you may also have a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). This test will be done either the same day as the planning CT scan or in the next few days.

## **Treatments**

You may need 1 to 5 treatment sessions, depending on the location of the tumor we are treating. Once we have scheduled your planning tests, we will tell you when your first treatment should be. Treatment times may vary. Most treatments last about 1 hour.

### ***Day of treatment***

Before your appointment:

- Take your usual medicines as instructed by your physician.
- You may bring a CD (compact disc) or a personal music device to listen to during treatment.

After checking in at the front desk of the Radiation Oncology Department, you will be brought to a waiting area where you will be asked to:

- Change into a hospital gown.
- Empty your bladder.

You will be taken to the treatment room. The radiation therapist will help you onto a special bed. The team will help position you in the face mask that was made for you.

Please let your therapist know if you have any questions or concerns during your treatment.

Because of the radiation, the team must leave the room before the radiosurgery begins. During the treatment, the physician and therapist will be monitoring you through a camera the entire time. You will be able to talk to the team through a 2-way intercom. You will be able to listen to music, if you wish.

### ***After your treatment***

You may resume your usual activities. It is important to keep all follow-up appointments as instructed.

### ***Follow-up care***

Before you leave the hospital, you will receive specific discharge instructions based on your diagnosis. It is very important to make follow-up appointments since the full effects of the radiosurgery do not happen right away. This care includes physician visits and imaging studies, such as MRI or CT scans. Please review your discharge instructions for information about your follow-up care.

## When to call the physician

Call the Radiation Oncology Department at 312.926.2520 right away if you are having any of the following symptoms:

- Mental status changes
- New onset of severe headaches
- Double vision or vision changes
- Sudden weakness in your arm or leg
- New seizures

During evenings, weekends or holidays, this number will forward to the answering service and the on-call physicians will be notified.