5 After treatment
Assessing radiation’s effects on cancer and your body

- Radiation’s effects are still at work in your tumor
- The outcome of the treatment won’t be known for a few months
- Pain from swallowing and fatigue will begin to subside 2-4 weeks after treatment

CONTINUING CARE
You should continue to see your doctors to ensure the cancer is going away. You will have scans to check your response to treatment. Your doctors will watch for any side effects from treatment.

Your doctors may recommend chemotherapy or immunotherapy after radiation.

DOCTOR'S SKETCHPAD

FOLLOW-UP
4-6 weeks after finishing his radiation, Luke sees his doctor. The doctor checks to make sure Luke’s side effects are going away.

3-6 months after finishing his radiation, Luke gets a scan to assess the success of the treatment. The doctor also checks Luke’s treatment-related side effects.

TREATMENT TRACKER

Before my planning session, I need:
- bloodwork
- PET scan
- bronchoscopy
- brain MRI
- pulmonary function tests
- stop taking medications

Before my planning session, I will:
- an IV
- 

During my planning session, I will:

Planning my treatment:

TREATMENT INFORMATION

Therapy begins, I will see my doctor every:

M T W Th F

More about me, I need to:
- take medications
- do nothing

MY INFORMATION

MY PLANNING SESSION

Before my planning session, I need:

Before my planning session, I will:

Planning my treatment:

TREATMENT INFORMATION

Therapy begins, I will see my doctor every:

M T W Th F

More about me, I need to:

My Experience

Luke has lung cancer and is about to receive radiation treatment. The nurse and doctor tell him what he needs to know about radiation.

Luke’s experience will give you an idea of what to expect. Your radiation treatment may be different.

WHAT IS EXTERNAL BEAM RADIATION TREATMENT?

A machine called a linear accelerator—or “linac”—delivers doses of high energy rays. These rays kill remaining cancer cells in and around your lung.

HOW WILL RADIATION AFFECT ME?

Radiation will not hurt. You will not see, smell or feel the radiation beams. In fact, you will not be able to tell that you are receiving treatment.

Most people continue to work, engage with others and live their normal lives while undergoing radiation treatment. Please, however, allow yourself the space to heal and rest.

2-3 weeks after starting treatment, you may begin to feel pain when swallowing or feel tired. Other side effects are possible.

If you experience any side effects or notice any changes in your health, ask your doctor or nurse. They are available every day if needed.
2 Planning session
Determining the best treatment position

- Duration: 60–90 minutes
- This is also called a “simulation scan”
- No radiation treatment happens today
- Radiation therapists position your body for the best treatment. They make a record so they can put you in the same position every time.

TRACING TUMOR MOTION
Your lung and your tumor(s) move as you breathe. Your care team may use these techniques and devices to track this movement.

- Breathing control
- Pharyngeal contrast
- Actual size
- Marks & tape
- Tattoos
- IVs

OTHER POSSIBILITIES
There is a 2-3 week delay in feeling side effects.

3 Treatment planning
Professionals create your custom plan

- Duration: 3–10 weekdays
- Your custom radiation plan targets the cancer and limits damage to healthy tissue
- A quality check is performed on your treatment plan before you are treated

Be sure to speak up if you cannot hold your position. The goal is to relax in this position. This is difficult if you are uncomfortable.

Everyone’s position will be different.

[Diagram showing various techniques]

CT scans are taken to customize his treatment plan.

IN THE MEANTIME
[List of tasks]

4 Treatment
Visiting your clinic for radiation

- Duration: 15–45 minutes
- The first treatment is usually the longest
- Your nurse and doctor will see you weekly to help you with side effects (trouble swallowing, fatigue)
- Some clinics check positioning again on the first day. This is called a ‘dry run’ or a ‘v-sim.’

Your treatment may be different from Luke’s shown here.

Luke notices that the room has thick walls and no window to the control room. Therapists verify Luke’s position before starting treatment.

The radiation machine is tested daily to ensure safe and accurate treatment.

There is a 2–3 week delay in feeling side effects.

If you experience any side effects or notice any changes in your health, tell your doctor or nurse. They are available every day if needed.