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

- Radiation’s effects are still at work in your body
- The outcome of treatment won’t be known for months
- You may also need a brachytherapy boost
- Side effects (bladder and bowel) begin to subside 2–3 weeks after treatment
- Contact the clinic if your side effects worsen or if you are uncomfortable

FOLLOW UP
4–6 weeks after his last appointment, the doctor checks Phil’s side effects and begins to see radiation’s effects.

CONTINUING CARE
You should continue to follow up with your doctor(s) to check you PSA levels. They will also monitor any remaining side effects.

My Information
BEFORE RADIATION TREATMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSA T-stage</th>
<th>Gleason/grade group</th>
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DOCTOR’S SKETCHPAD

TREATMENT TRACKER

<table>
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<th>VISITS</th>
<th>BOOST (TREATMENTS)</th>
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MISSING APPOINTMENTS

- Contact your doctor.
- Each missed day will be added to the end of your treatment schedule.
- Long gaps between appointments may make your treatment less effective.

HORMONE THERAPY

You may receive hormone therapy at the same time as radiation.
Hormone therapy may start before radiation and may continue after.
Start date
Duration
Months before radiation
Related scans I may receive:
- Bone density scan

COMMON HORMONE THERAPY SIDE EFFECTS
- Hot flashes
- Weight gain

WHAT IS EXTERNAL BEAM RADIATION TREATMENT?

A machine called a linear accelerator—‘linac’—delivers doses of high energy rays. These rays kill cancer cells in your prostate and around it.

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 into treatment, you may experience differences in your bowel and bladder habits. 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
Determined 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

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 is different.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES
- enema
- oral contrast
- IV contrast
- rectal contrast
- penile clamp

marks & tape

You may receive these markings during this session or in treatment.

3 Treatment planning
Professionals create your custom plan

- Duration: 3–10 weekdays
- Your plan targets the cancer and limits radiation on healthy tissue
- Your plan is tested before you are treated

Your experience may be different than Phil’s.

4 Treatment
Visiting your clinic daily for radiation

- Duration: 15–45 minutes
- The first treatment is usually the longest
- Before treatment, drink water and don’t go to the bathroom until after treatment
- For many, not peeing is the hardest part of treatment
- Your nurse and doctor will see you weekly. You should mention any side effects like changing bladder and bowel habits

Phil notices that the treatment room has thick walls and no window to the control room. His mold from the planning session is on the table.

Phil is back to start treatment. He’s a little nervous. He needs to pee, but he is trying his best not to go.

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

Tell your nurse and doctor if you notice any side effects or changes in your health. There is a 2–3 week delay in feeling side effects.

‘BOOST’
You may receive extra targeted radiation treatments called a ‘boost.’ It will feel just like your other radiation treatments. A brachytherapy boost is also possible.

IN THE MEANTIME
Plan
- Arrange transportation to the clinic
- Coordinate with work and others, so you can come to treatments and focus on healing
- Prepare for treatment
- Find a water bottle to use before treatments
- Get answers to your questions about insurance and/or billing
Seek Support
- Consider reaching out to friends, family and others
- The nurse can refer you to other services