Sedation for Your Radiation Treatment

Some radiation treatments for lung, breast, or gynecological cancers require that patients receive sedation for their treatment. Sedation medications are given through a vein (IV) to induce a state of relaxation and to control pain.

This sedation medication is a form of anesthesia. You will not be completely asleep and will still be able to answer questions, move with help, and breathe on your own. At UWMC Cancer Center, our team of doctors and nurses are specially trained in sedation.

Prior to Your First Treatment

A sedation risk assessment will be done before your first treatment. This involves a nursing assessment; looking at your medical, surgical, and anesthesia histories; and a brief physical exam. Sometimes this can be done at your first clinic visit with your doctor. And, some information can be gathered over the phone. If this has not been done prior to your treatment, plan to arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled treatment time. You will need to arrange for someone to take you home after your treatment.

The Day Before Your Treatment

Arrange for someone to bring you to the Cancer Center and to drive you home. Most times, the treatment takes about 2 to 3 hours. Each case is unique. Ask the doctor or nurse about how long your treatment will take.

For safety reasons, do not eat solid food for at least 6 hours prior to your treatment. You can drink clear liquids (any liquid you can see through, such as water, apple juice, soda) up until 4 hours prior to your treatment. If you accidentally eat or drink something that is
Questions?

Call 206-598-4100

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Radiation Oncology
Brachytherapy Nurse
206-598-2579

Cancer Center
206-598-4100

After hours, call UWMC Paging Operator at 206-598-6190 and ask to page the Radiation Oncology Resident on call.

not within these guidelines, contact your nurse and ask for instructions. In some cases, your treatment may need to be cancelled or rescheduled.

If you have any concerns or questions prior to your treatment, call the Patient Care Coordinator who scheduled your visit, or the Brachytherapy Nurse at the Cancer Center at 206-598-2579.

What to Expect on Treatment Day

When you come to the Cancer Center, your nurse will bring you to a procedure room to change into a gown. If you do not have IV access (such as a Hickman catheter or PICC line), the nurse will need to insert an IV line. Medications and IV fluids will be given via this line before, during, and after your treatment. If an IV line has been put in for treatment, it will be removed before you go home.

Your nurse will also give you some oxygen during the treatment. The medications you will receive can decrease respirations. Your oxygen saturation, blood pressure, and heart rate will be monitored throughout your visit.

Side effects of the medications can include fatigue, drowsiness, nausea, and headaches. If you experience any of these symptoms, please let your nurse or doctor know. They may want to adjust your medicines for your next treatment.