

UW Medicine



Sedation for Your Radiation Treatment

This handout explains how to prepare for and what to expect when you have sedation for radiation therapy.

Why do I need sedation for my radiation treatment?

If you are receiving radiation treatments for lung, breast, or gynecological cancers, you will need sedation for treatment. Sedatives are medicines that help you feel relaxed and feel less pain. You will receive this medicine through an *intravenous* (IV) line in your vein (IV).

Sedatives are a form of *anesthesia*. You will be relaxed, but not fully asleep. You will still be able to answer questions, move with help, and breathe on your own.

Before Your First Treatment

We will do a sedation risk assessment before your first treatment, to make sure the sedation will not cause problems for you. We will look at your medical, surgical, and anesthesia histories, and give you a brief physical exam.

This assessment may be done at your first clinic visit with your doctor. We may also ask you questions over the phone.

If this assessment has not been done before your treatment, plan to arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled treatment time. We will do your assessment before we start your treatment.

You will need to arrange for someone to take you home after your treatment. Ask the doctor or nurse about how long your treatment will take.



Plan for someone to bring you to the hospital and to take you home after your treatment.

The Day Before Your Treatment

Make sure you have a responsible adult who can bring you to the hospital and drive you home. Most times, the treatment takes about 2 to 3 hours.

Treatment Day

- Do **not** eat solid food for at least 6 hours before your treatment.
- You can drink clear liquids (any liquid you can see through, such as water, apple juice, soda) up until 4 hours before your treatment.
- Starting 4 hours before your treatment, do **not** eat or drink anything.
- If you accidentally eat or drink something that is not within these guidelines, call your nurse and ask for instructions. Your treatment may need to be cancelled or rescheduled. **This is for your safety.**

If you have any concerns or questions before your treatment, call the Patient Care Coordinator who scheduled your visit, or the Program Support Supervisor at 206.598.2579.

What to Expect on Treatment Day

- When you come to the hospital, 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. We will give you medicines and fluids through this line before, during, and after your treatment. If we place an IV line for treatment, we will remove it before you go home.
- Your nurse will give you oxygen during the treatment. The medicines you will receive can lower your breathing rate. We will monitor your oxygen saturation, blood pressure, and heart rate throughout your visit.
- Side effects of the medicines can include fatigue, drowsiness, nausea, and headaches. If you have any of these symptoms, tell your nurse or doctor. They may want to adjust your medicines for your next treatment.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC Radiation Oncology
206:598:4100

After hours, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Radiation Oncology Resident on call.