



Government of Western Australia  
North Metropolitan Health Service  
Sir Charles Gairdner Osborne Park Health Care Group



# CyberKnife® Abdomen treatment

Patient information



**NM**



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## What is the CyberKnife® System?

The CyberKnife® Robotic Radiosurgery System is a radiation therapy treatment machine mounted on a robotic arm similar to robots used in car manufacturing.

The CyberKnife® system can track tumour and patient movement to deliver radiation to tumours anywhere in the body, with a high degree of accuracy. Although the name implies scalpels and surgery, the CyberKnife® system does not cut the skin.

## Treatment for the abdominal area

CyberKnife® works the same way as all other forms of radiation treatment in that it does not remove the tumour or lesion, but it interrupts the DNA of the tumour cells so they lose their ability to reproduce.

In the case of abdomen treatments, it is almost impossible to prevent patients and their internal organs (such as pancreas, liver or kidney) moving during treatment.

The CyberKnife® System is capable of moving with the patient's anatomy, allowing a greater degree of accuracy and higher doses of radiation to some areas, while minimising the dose to the surrounding healthy tissue. This helps to reduced side effects commonly associated with conventional radiation therapy treatments.

## Pre-treatment preparation

In preparation for CyberKnife® treatment you may be required to have scans and fiducial markers (gold seeds) inserted. If this is required, you will be advised and necessary appointments will be made.

### Fiducial markers

Fiducial markers enable the CyberKnife® to pinpoint the exact location of the tumour.

Insertion of fiducial markers involves a procedure in which one or more tiny gold seeds are placed into the tumour using a needle guided by ultrasound or computed tomography (CT) scan. This is usually done as a day procedure. If this appointment is postponed or cancelled, please contact us.

### CT planning appointment

The CT planning appointment will be approximately one week after the fiducial markers are inserted to allow any swelling to subside.

You will need to bring with you a very snug, fitting vest or t-shirt to this appointment as you will be scanned and receive treatment wearing it.

A special custom-fit body cradle may be made that will enable you to lie in the same position for each treatment.

During this scan you may be instructed to hold your breath for a short period of time.

Contrast may be required for the planning scan, and this involves the insertion of an intravenous cannula by our nursing team.

Using data from the CT scan, a customised treatment plan will be formulated by a team that includes your doctor, CyberKnife® radiation therapist and medical physicist. This takes about 1-2 weeks.

## During the treatment

Please wear comfortable clothes and the vest or t-shirt you wore for the CT planning scan to your appointments. LEDs will be attached to your vest or t-shirt and you will be asked to lie on the treatment couch in your body cradle. Once you are in the correct position, checks will be completed and your treatment will begin.

When treatment is in progress, the team will be able to see you on the cameras and talk to you via intercom. During treatment, images will be taken continually to confirm the treatment location.

The CyberKnife® will move around you and treat from many different angles and positions. You will not feel anything, and the equipment will not touch you.

Treatment takes approximately 1 hour, and you will be required to lie still and breathe normally during that time.

Due to the length of time you must lie flat on the couch, we advise that you refrain from eating a big meal before your treatment. You may bring your favourite music or audio book to listen to during treatment.

The treatment is usually delivered in 3 to 5 sessions on alternate days. Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time and allow 2 hours for each visit.



## Possible side effects

Treatment is generally well tolerated, and side effects are minimal. Reactions are very individual and may not occur the same in every patient. Some patients may experience some degree of nausea during the treatment, or in the 1-2 weeks after it finishes.

Your doctor will have explained potential side effects at your initial appointment and will prescribe anti-nausea medication for you to take daily during treatment, if required. If you require further information about the side effects particular to your treatment, please ask your doctor.

## Emotional wellbeing

It is completely normal for you to feel emotional for some time after the diagnosis of cancer. Sleeping, eating and mood disturbances are all quite common under these circumstances.

Try spending time with people that make you feel good. Relax and do things you enjoy. Try to exercise regularly and say no to those activities you don't feel like doing.

Tell the radiation therapists or nursing team if you feel you are having difficulty coping with your diagnosis, treatment, domestic and travel arrangements or finances. They will organise for you to see trained professionals as needed.

## Completion of treatment

Allow yourself time to recover once treatment is completed. Each patient responds differently to their treatment and recovery times may vary. It is best not to compare your progress with that of others.

If you are experiencing any side effects from the treatment, these may continue for the next few weeks and may even get worse before they begin to get better. Side effects should gradually subside within 1 month.

Tiredness and fatigue due to radiotherapy may affect you for some time. Here are some tips on how to manage this:

- Continue exercise such as walking, bowling, golf or swimming
- Consider scheduling your activities for the day according to your energy levels
- Ensure you have a healthy balanced diet
- Ensure you are adequately hydrated
- Accept help from friends or family and ask for help if you need it.

## Follow-up appointment

When radiation therapy is completed your radiation oncologist will organise a follow-up appointment.

If you experience any problems related to your treatment after completion and before your follow-up appointment, please contact Radiation Oncology on (08) 6383 3000, Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm.

Outside these hours you can see your GP or, if the matter is urgent, go to the Emergency Department.



## Further support

There are many services offering support to people undergoing cancer treatments.

These include:

### Look Good Feel Better

Free call: 1800 650 960

Website: [www.lgfb.org.au](http://www.lgfb.org.au)

Look Good, Feel Better is a free workshop run by professionals from the cosmetics industry for women. The practical workshop covers skincare, make-up and headwear demonstrations and participants receive a complimentary Confidence Kit full of skincare and make-up products.

Experienced volunteers from the beauty industry help show how to manage the changes that may occur to the skin, hair and general appearance as a result of treatment.

Workshops are run frequently in the Radiation Oncology Department. Please speak to the radiation therapists or nursing staff if you are interested in attending.

### WA Psycho-Oncology Service

Phone: (08) 6457 1177

Email: [wapos@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:wapos@health.wa.gov.au)

This service is available to adult Western Australians diagnosed with cancer. Clinical psychologists apply psychological theory and evidenced-based assessment and treatment strategies to help people address their needs and meet their goals. You may self-refer or ask a health professional to refer you.

### Cancer Council WA

Phone: 131 120

Website: [www.cancerwa.asn.au](http://www.cancerwa.asn.au)

The charity works across every area of every cancer, from research to prevention and support, assisting people from diagnosis through treatment and beyond.



### Healthdirect

Phone: 1800 022 222

Website: [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

This free 24-hour health service offers general guidance for patients, including symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options.

### Solaris Cancer Care

Phone: (08) 6383 3475

Website: <https://solariscancercare.org.au>

DD block,  
Ground floor,  
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital,  
Hospital Avenue, Nedlands

Solaris Cancer Care provides up-to-date, practical, evidence-based information on complementary integrative approaches to cancer management, disease prevention, health and wellbeing activities and support services that are designed to help people feel and cope better with their cancer and treatment.

### Cancer Australia

Phone: 1800 624 973

Website: [www.canceraustralia.gov.au](http://www.canceraustralia.gov.au)

Established by the Australian Government to benefit Australians affected by cancer.

### WA Cancer & Palliative Care Network

Phone: 0400 021 538

Upper GI cancer nurse coordinator (for patients with cancer of the pancreas)

## What is the referral process?

The only public CyberKnife® treatment is available in Perth at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. Western Australian patients will need a referral from their doctor addressed to one of these consultants:

- Dr Nicholas Bucknell
- Dr Sean Bydder
- Dr Jeremy Croker
- Dr Joshua Dass
- Dr Suki Gill
- Dr Chris Harper
- Dr Colin Tang
- Dr Mandy Taylor
- Dr Rohen White

As of 1 July 2024, we are unable to accept patients from outside WA. Patients from other areas, including overseas, should instead discuss similar available treatment options closer to home.

## Radiation oncology referrals

Email [scgh.cancercentrereferrals@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:scgh.cancercentrereferrals@health.wa.gov.au)

Fax number: (08) 6457 1053

## What is the cost for treatment?

There are no out-of-pocket expenses to Medicare card holders.

## CyberKnife® contact details:

### Radiation Oncology

Cancer Centre  
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital  
Gairdner Drive  
Nedlands WA 6009  
Phone: (08) 6383 3000  
Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm

### For general CyberKnife® enquiries

Contact the chief radiation therapist  
Phone: (08) 6383 3404



The information provided is for information purposes only. If you are a patient using this publication, you should seek assistance from a healthcare professional when interpreting these materials and applying them to your individual circumstances.

