

Preparing your bowels and bladder for CT simulation and treatments – gynecological cancer

Arthur Child

What is a CT simulation appointment?

This is a CT scan (image) of your pelvis. It is used to plan your radiation treatment. You will not get a report after the appointment because it is not a diagnostic scan. We will call you to set a time and date for your appointment.

What do I have to do?

You need to have an empty bowel and a comfortably full bladder for your CT simulation. You will also need this for **all** of your radiation treatments.

Why do I need to prepare?

Having a comfortably full bladder helps move your small bowel (intestines) away from the treatment area. This will help lower your risk of side effects such as diarrhea.

Having regular poops (bowel movements) helps keep your rectum the same size and in the same place for treatment. It also **helps reduce gas** in the treatment area.

Note: If your **rectum is full or gassy**, you will need to have a bowel movement or pass gas before you can complete your simulation or radiation treatment. This could mean you may need to stay longer for your appointment(s).

What can I do to help have an empty bowel and a full bladder?

Before your CT Simulation appointment and throughout treatment:

- The best thing you can do is to keep yourself hydrated. Drink sips of water throughout the day, 7 days a week. Start now and continue until you are done all of your radiation treatments.

Note: A **comfortably full** bladder means that you feel the need to go pee, but you can hold your pee in your bladder for at least 15 minutes.

- Avoid gas-forming foods like cabbage and beans. Read the diet teaching sheet '**Managing Gas and Bloating with Nutrition During Radiation Treatment**' for more information.
- You will also need to have regular bowel movements. This will help you to get ready for the CT simulation, and all of your radiation treatments. It will also help to make sure that you get through your appointments in the quickest amount of time.

What if I do not have a daily bowel movement?

Start using a laxative such as RestoraLAX® or Lax-A-Day® (1 cap of powder in water) to help your body have a daily bowel movement. Talk to the pharmacist about how to use laxatives.

- Follow the instructions on the back of this page. Preparing for the CT Simulation appointment and treatment appointments are **a little different**.

Instructions for Your Simulation Appointment:

The day of your CT simulation appointment:

- Drink fluids and eat as you normally would, but avoid foods that can cause gas such as cabbage and beans.
- Try to have a bowel movement before you arrive for your appointment.

Your bowel should be empty and you should have a “comfortably” full bladder. **Drink more water as needed to feel comfortably full.**

When you arrive at the cancer centre:

- Go to the Radiation Therapy reception desk at your appointment time. The receptionist will show you to the CT Simulator area.
- The CT Simulator staff will talk with you about your bowel and bladder preparation.
- You will be asked to go to the washroom and empty your bladder.
- You will get 2 cups (500 mL) of water to drink.
 - You may be having 2 scans — one with a full bladder and one with an empty bladder. The staff will coordinate the timing of each scan.
- Appointments may take longer than expected if your bowels or bladder are not ready.

After your CT Simulation appointment:

We will call you with the date and time of your first Radiation Treatment appointment.

Instructions for Your Radiation Treatment Appointments:

Each treatment day at home:

- Eat as you normally would but avoid foods that can cause gas such as cabbage and beans.
- Try to have a bowel movement before your appointments.
- **1 hour before** your treatment appointment, empty your bladder, then drink 2 cups (500mL) of water. Try not to go to the bathroom or empty your bladder again until **after** your treatment appointment unless it becomes too hard to hold.

Your bowels should feel empty and you should have a “comfortably” full bladder. **Drink more water as needed to feel comfortably full.**

When you arrive at the cancer centre:

- Go to the Radiation Therapy reception desk at your appointment time. The receptionist will direct you to the treatment unit and review your next appointment time.
- The treatment team will come to the waiting area when they are ready to bring you in for treatment. Appointments may take longer than expected, if your bowels or bladder are not ready.

