

Radiation Treatment Breath Hold

Why do I need to hold my breath?

We want to make sure your heart and lungs get as little radiation as possible.

When you take a deep breath in and hold it, your lungs get bigger. This makes more space between the edge of your chest and your heart. It helps to keep your lungs and heart out of the treatment area as much as possible. If you practice holding your breath before your treatment, it will be easier to do during your treatment.



Is there a chance I will not need to hold my breath?

You will know at your first treatment appointment if you need to hold your breath. You may have 2 planning CT scans:

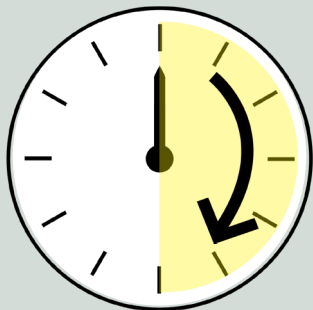
- in one, you will hold your breath for 25 to 30 seconds
- in the other, you will breathe normally

Your radiation team will look at these scans and choose which one works best for your treatment.

What if I can't hold my breath?

You will still get your radiation treatment. Your radiation therapists will protect your heart and lungs from the radiation in a different way.

How do I practice holding my breath before my radiation treatments?



Practice holding your breath for **30 seconds** at a time

To practice holding your breath:

1. Lie down on your back
2. Raise both arms above your head
3. Take a deep breath in and hold it. If you can hold your breath for 30 seconds, you will find it easier to do during your treatment

Practice many times a day

Take a break if you feel light-headed or dizzy



Ask your healthcare team if you have any questions about your treatment

How will my radiation therapists know if I am holding my breath?

During treatment, your radiation therapists will monitor your breathing. If you cough, sneeze, or stop holding your breath, they will turn the treatment machine off. They will start treatment again when you are in the right position and ready to hold your breath. This keeps you safe and makes sure your radiation treatment is done the right way.



If your radiation team said to breathe normally, **do not** hold your breath.

If you hold your breath when you don't need to, it can move the treatment area to the wrong place.