



Powerful & Precise Radiation.

Cancer Treatment That
Prioritizes Your Quality of Life

PATIENT WELCOME GUIDE

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WELCOME TO THE

Emory Proton Therapy Center.

As the only proton therapy center in the state of Georgia, we offer patients an advanced and extremely precise form of radiation treatment. Your care at the proton therapy center is integrated with the wide array of resources, subspecialized clinical care, clinical trials, and other advanced treatments available within Winship Cancer Institute, Georgia's National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. In alignment with Winship's core values, we are committed to patient and family-centered compassionate care using the most advanced radiation treatments. We will work with you to assess your treatment options and create a personalized plan for your care, transforming how your tumor or cancer is identified and treated.

This guide is designed to be a resource for you during your treatment, to introduce you to the people on your team and to provide an overview of your care at the Emory Proton Therapy Center.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your healthcare.

What is Proton Therapy?

Proton therapy is the most precise form of radiation treatment. Most radiation treatments use X-rays, but proton therapy uses protons, which are tiny particles from the center of an atom. Compared to a beam of X-rays, a proton beam can better concentrate the radiation directly in the target. Another unique feature is that after treating the target, protons come to a complete stop, meaning they deliver no radiation dose to normal areas beyond the target, thereby sparing surrounding healthy tissue and organs.

Because proton beams can better reduce or eliminate radiation to sensitive normal, healthy tissues, proton therapy may reduce some of the side effects that can be seen during radiation treatments as well as potential long-term side effects and risks that can occur months or years after radiation treatment. The precise nature of proton therapy may also allow for a higher radiation dose to the tumor.



Behind the Scenes

1 GANTRY

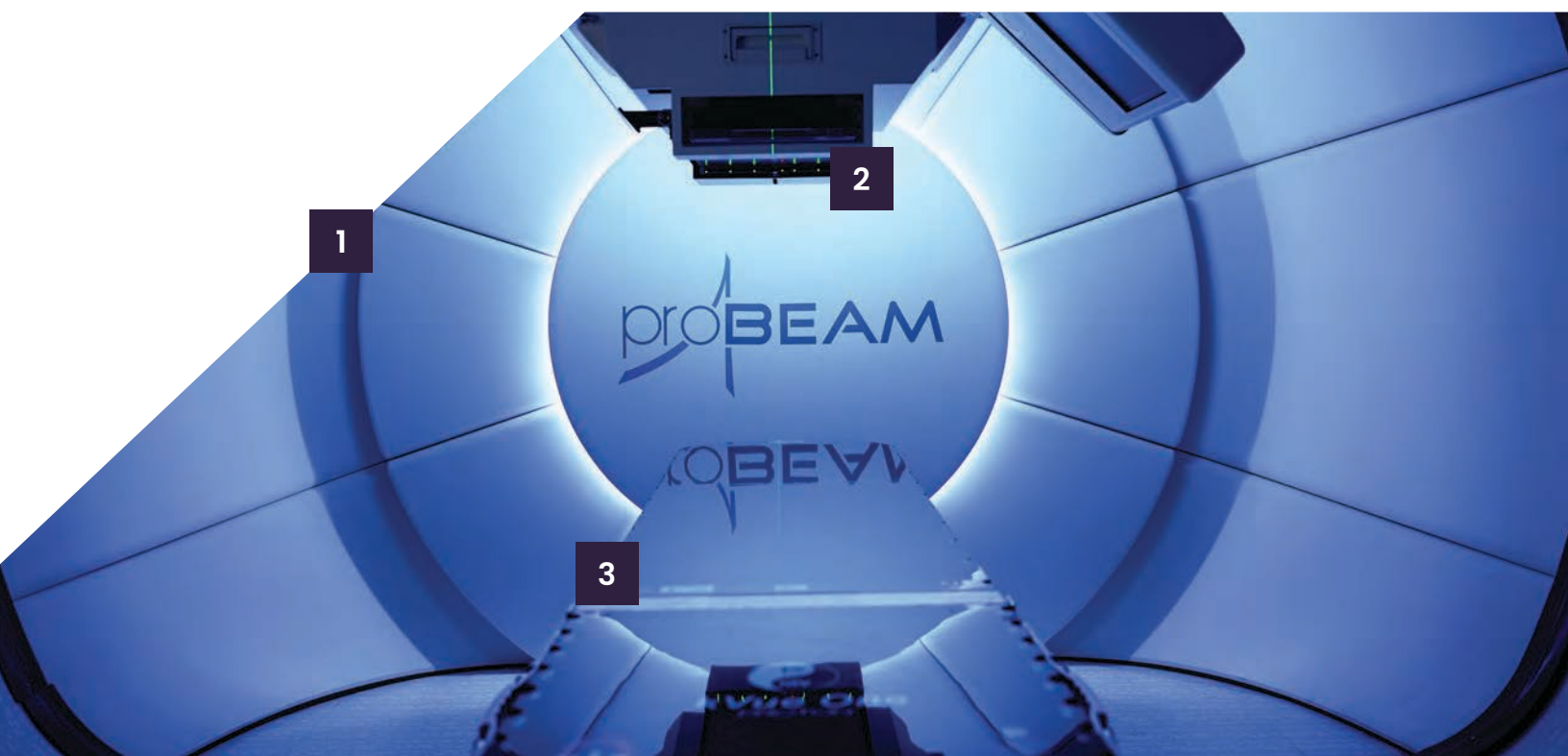
Although not visible from inside the treatment room, each proton gantry is nearly 3 stories tall and weighs about 270 tons. This large structure can rotate 360 degrees around the patient so that the proton beam can be directed from any direction required. The proton gantry is equipped with low dose x-ray panels that can also acquire cone-beam CT scans, 3-D imaging technology which helps ensure you are in the proper position and the proton beam is aimed correctly prior to treatment delivery.

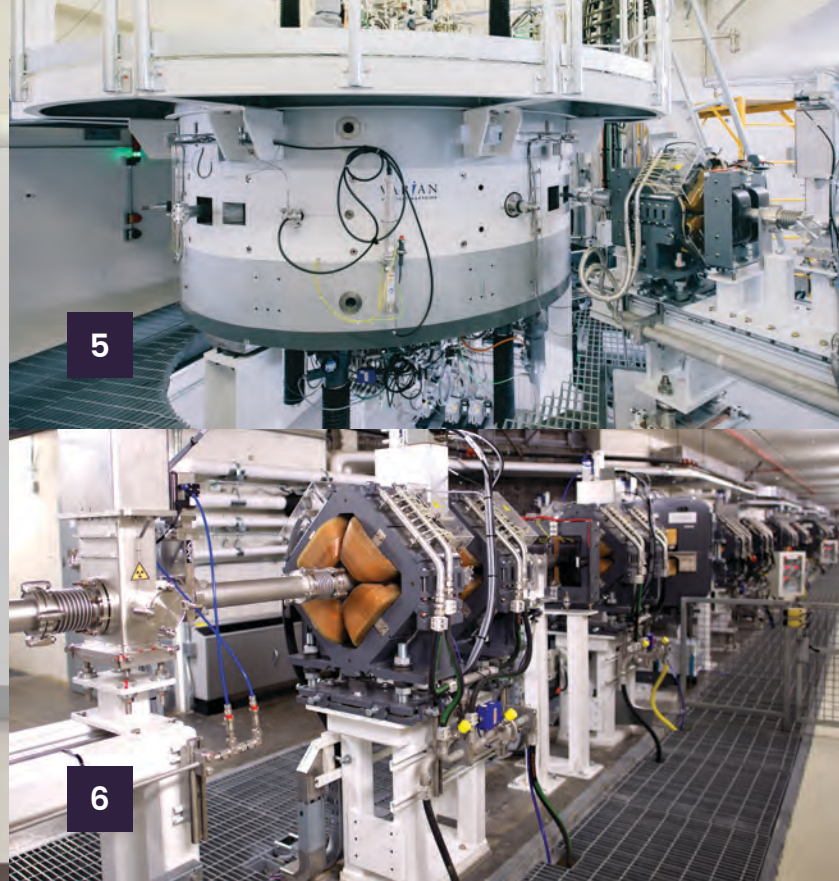
2 TREATMENT DELIVERY

All of our treatment rooms use the most advanced pencil beam scanning technology. A narrow stream of protons is steered by a magnet to “paint” the radiation to match the size, shape and depth of the target. This allows for what is called intensity-modulated proton therapy for maximum flexibility in treatment planning and sparing of normal tissues.

3 ROBOTIC TREATMENT TABLE

The robotic couch precisely aligns patients, fine-tuning the positioning by making corrections with six degrees of freedom.





4 FIXED-BEAM ROOM

The fixed-beam room is specially designed primarily for the treatment of patients with prostate cancer. The proton beam comes out of the wall at a fixed position and cannot rotate. A robotic patient positioner allows the patient to be rotated in front of the beam to treat from the desired treatment angles. The fixed beam room is equipped with low dose x-ray panels that are used to ensure you are in the proper position and the proton beam is correctly aimed prior to treatment delivery.

5 CYCLOTRON

Proton therapy starts in the 90-ton superconducting cyclotron, which uses an electrical and magnetic field to accelerate a stream of protons to a high energy, enabling them to reach the depth of the tumor. As it comes out of the cyclotron, the proton beam is traveling at about 100,000 miles per second, 0.61 times the speed of light!

6 BEAMLINE

The proton beam travels through a long vacuum tube, called the beamline, to reach each treatment room. Special magnets are used to steer the proton beam and keep it focused as it travels to each treatment room.



OUR Proton Beam Delivery System

While much of the complexity of the proton therapy system is “behind the scenes,” it is a considerable technological and engineering feat to generate a high-energy stream of subatomic particles and magnetically steer them through a series of bends and turns down a city block to reach a precise point in a patient.

Safety is our priority, with multiple layers of safeguards and quality assurance steps in addition to a dedicated staff of engineers and physicists monitoring the proton system and beam delivery to ensure delivery of the most accurate and precise treatment.

EQUIPMENT DOWNTIME

As with any system this sophisticated and complex, there are occasional periods of machine downtime or other delays. If the system is not performing within our tight tolerances, your treatment cannot be delivered, and treatment will not be resumed until the team has ensured the system is operating within tolerances.

There may be occasional inconveniences caused by equipment downtime, which may delay your treatment time or require treatment in an alternate treatment room. Please be aware that your treating radiation oncologist is kept aware of any missed treatments or downtime events, and they will review your treatment plan and recommend any adjustments that may be required to ensure that you continue to receive optimal care for your diagnosis.

On the rare occasion of more protracted proton center downtime, your physician may recommend continuation of your treatment at another Emory location using our most advanced X-ray-based treatments, before returning to treatment at the proton therapy center.

We are committed to keeping you informed of any delays in as timely a manner as possible. When an issue is identified, it is not always known how long it may take to return the system to normal operations, but we update patients as we are updated on the progress. We recognize that downtime and delays are disruptive. Thank you for entrusting us with your care.

Meet Your Care Team

CLIENT EXPERIENCE COORDINATORS (CECS)

Client Experience Coordinators (CECs) are one of your primary contacts throughout your care. Starting at intake, through the completion of treatment and beyond, the coordinators will greet you when you arrive and check you in for your consult, simulation, weekly on-treatment visits (OTVs) and follow-up visits. CECs also partner with your care team to coordinate your clinic scheduling and collect your medical records.

MEDICAL ASSISTANTS

Our medical assistants (MAs) play a key role in supporting the clinical care team. In this multitasking role, the medical assistant will support your care by performing both clinical and administrative duties. Medical assistants will help prepare you for procedures and exams, perform lab collections, and relay information to patients and members of the care team. Medical assistants wear royal blue scrubs.

REGISTERED NURSES

Your care is supported by a team of registered nurses (RNs) who work closely with your providers, therapists, support services, client experience coordinators and others to ensure that you receive the highest quality of clinical care. Nurses will do intake for your consultation and on-treatment visits, prepare you for procedures, provide education, help you manage any treatment side effects and support all clinical aspects of your care. Nurses wear navy blue scrubs.

ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS

Your Advanced Practice Provider (APP) is either a Nurse Practitioner (NP) or Physician Assistant (PA) who is specially trained in radiation oncology to assess your needs, manage side effects and participate in your overall care and survivorship. Your APP works closely with your radiation oncologist to provide seamless continuity of care and communication between you, your loved ones and your care team. Advanced Practice Providers may wear white lab coats.

RADIATION ONCOLOGISTS

Your radiation oncologist is the physician who oversees and directs your treatment and care. Working closely with other physician specialists involved in your treatment, your radiation oncologist will lead the care team to design your radiation treatment plan, supervise the delivery of your care, manage your side effects, assess your response to therapy after treatment, and participate in your survivorship. Together with your physician and loved ones, you will discuss your diagnosis, treatment options, and any questions or concerns that might arise during the course of your care. Radiation oncologists may wear white lab coats.

DOSIMETRISTS

A medical dosimetrist has advanced training in the principles and the technique of radiation treatment planning.

Following the prescription and direction of your radiation oncologist, and working in close collaboration with Medical Physics, dosimetrists create a customized treatment plan designed specifically to meet your clinical needs, targeting the tumor while minimizing dose to the surrounding healthy tissue.

MEDICAL PHYSICISTS

Medical physicists work closely with the radiation oncologists and dosimetrists to provide expert guidance to ensure we deliver the safest and most effective treatment specific to you. They perform daily quality assurance checks on our treatment rooms which allow the proton center to maintain the highest level of radiation safety.

RADIATION THERAPISTS

Radiation therapists are clinical team members who are specially trained to perform your CT simulation as well as administer your daily radiation therapy treatment. The radiation therapist delivers your prescribed and planned course of radiation therapy as per your Radiation Oncologist's instruction and in accordance with proton radiation therapy standard practices and departmental procedures. You will see your radiation therapist team daily. They can answer questions and assist you with modifying your treatment time, if necessary.

Radiation therapists wear black scrubs.

MRI TECHNOLOGISTS

The MRI technologists are responsible for carrying out both diagnostic MRI scans as well as planning MRIs that are performed during your simulation appointment. They are responsible for operating the MRI equipment as well as helping to properly position you for your MRI examination. MRI technologists wear black scrubs.

ENGINEERS

Specially trained engineers from the proton equipment manufacturer, Varian, are on-site daily. Although you normally will not meet the engineers, they assist in continuous system monitoring of the cyclotron, beamline, and treatment rooms, performing routine and preventative maintenance, and assessing and correcting any issues that may result in center downtime or delays to ensure the system is functioning at the highest level of precision.

SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers are here to support your emotional and social well-being during your treatment. They are trained to provide counseling and, if necessary, facilitate any necessary financial, housing or transportation support. Social workers collaborate with your care team to ensure that your care is approached holistically. They are also available to discuss palliative care as necessary.

CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS

The Child Life Specialist helps pediatric patients and their families navigate and manage the emotional impacts of diagnosis, anesthesia (if necessary) and treatment. The specialist works closely with the care

team and family to understand the unique needs of pediatric patients and families so that care can be tailored for an optimal experience.

DIETICIANS

Your dietitian is a trained nutrition expert who will provide you with guidance on how to best support your care with optimal dietary choices. Your dietitian works closely with you, your loved ones, and your care team to understand your nutritional goals and define a plan for achieving the best treatment outcomes.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

Speech-Language Pathologists are focused on the evaluation, maintenance, and restoration of swallowing function. The speech therapy team is based on the 10th floor of the Medical Office Tower at Emory University Hospital Midtown and is primarily involved in the care of patients receiving treatment for head and neck cancer. It is important to keep appointments with speech therapy during treatment to ensure the best swallowing outcomes.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE TEAM

The patient experience team works with you and the care team staff to ensure that your experience is as positive as possible. These individuals are available to discuss any feedback, compliments, questions or concerns you may have. In addition, they can offer guidance regarding lodging and transportation, and provide recommendations for restaurants, activities and amenities, and anything else you and your loved ones might need throughout your care.

CLINICAL RESEARCH COORDINATORS

The clinical trial coordinator will help explain any clinical trials that may be options for your care. At Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University, we are dedicated to advancing cancer care through groundbreaking research in new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat diseases. Clinical research coordinators work closely with the rest of the team to provide an extra level of care coordination for patients participating in clinical trials to ensure the highest quality care.

INSURANCE SPECIALISTS

The insurance specialist works very closely with you and your provider throughout the entire insurance process. They will help you understand what your financial responsibilities may be, and what to expect during the insurance authorization process. They will be your primary point of contact for financial or insurance questions through treatment completion.

To reach anyone on your care team, please call the proton center main line at **404-251-2690** or contact us online via the Patient Portal.

What to Expect

STEP 1 CONSULTATION

Preparing For Your Consultation

Prior to your appointment, we strongly encourage you to complete all available forms located under the “forms” section in the Vision Tree Optimal Care Portal to help expedite the check-in process on the day of your first appointment. If you are unable to complete the required forms in advance, please plan to arrive at least 30 minutes ahead of your scheduled appointment time to do so. Additionally, on the day of your appointment, it is important you bring photo identification, an updated insurance card and a list of all your current medications and prescriptions.

To appropriately prepare for your upcoming appointment, please complete the below checklist:

- ☐ Log into your Vision Tree Portal and click on the link in your “Forms” section and fill out all available forms. Please make sure to complete the forms in their entirety and click “Save.” You can find the portal by going to emoryproton.com, scrolling to the bottom of the page and clicking on the “Visiontree Optimal Care” link.
- ☐ If applicable: Upload any documents/medical records to the “Medical Records” Section in the Vision Tree Portal.
- ☐ Review any material from your physician in the “Patient Education” Section in the Vision Tree Portal.



VISIONTREE OPTIMAL CARE

At the Emory Proton Therapy Center, the VTOC portal is used to improve communication and information exchange with your physician and care team through patient-reported outcomes tracking, health record management, sharing personalized education material and research study/registry participation. Patients will be required to complete questionnaires prior to treatment, weekly while undergoing treatment and five or more years following the completion of treatment. These questionnaires will be used by your care team to help manage your symptoms and overall quality of life during and after treatment.

Consultation Appointment

On the day of your consultation*, you will check in at the front desk and present your photo identification and an updated insurance card. Our front desk staff will check you in for your appointment and you will be escorted to the clinic waiting room.

During the consultation, a Registered Nurse or Medical Assistant will collect information related to your diagnosis, record vital signs, confirm current medications and relay pertinent medical information to the rest of your care team. Your doctor will review your history, perform a physical exam, review all your treatment options and make recommendations.

Sometimes additional tests or procedures are needed before specific recommendations can be made for your care. Your doctor will discuss all radiation treatment options, including proton therapy, and will discuss the details of treatment including the potential risks and side effects as well as answer questions.

Your care may be discussed with a team of doctors from different specialties who make a recommendation on the best plan of care. The optimal care may involve consultation and treatment with other physicians.

After the consultation visit, you will check out with a client experience coordinator. They will assist you with scheduling any follow-up appointments or tests recommended by your provider.

Please plan up to two hours for your consultation. It is recommended you bring a notepad and prepare any questions you have beforehand to allow our clinical team to properly address all of your needs. Our staff is available to provide you with any additional resources you may need at your consultation or beyond.

*Your consultation may take place at an Emory location other than the proton center.

Prostate Fiducial Marker and/or Hydrogel Placement

Patients with prostate cancer typically undergo a procedure to place three small markers in the prostate, called fiducial markers. These markers allow the treatment team to accurately align the treatment each day to the location of the prostate. Your doctor will also determine if you are eligible for placement of a special hydrogel between the prostate and rectum (Space OAR®). This gel creates additional space between the prostate and the rectum to reduce radiation exposure to the rectum. The gel dissolves after a few months. These procedures may be performed in our clinic under local anesthesia (numbing injections), and you will receive separate education and instruction about the procedure, which is done prior to simulation.

STEP 2 SIMULATION

What is CT/MRI Simulation?

A CT simulation scan is an image of you obtained in the same position you will be in during treatment each day. These images are used to design your treatment plan. An MRI may also be obtained to provide additional imaging information to help design your treatment plan. These scans are generally used only for radiation treatment planning and a “report” is not generated about these images.

Preparing for Your Simulation

On simulation day you may be meeting with multiple staff members to review treatment education, dietary guidelines, financial updates and social service needs prior to or after your scans. Please anticipate being here for at least two hours. Prior to arriving for your simulation scans:

- Dress in comfortable/loose clothing and avoid excess jewelry. You may need to disrobe and change into a gown for your scans.
- If you are receiving treatment to the brain or head and neck area, it is important to maintain a similar hair grooming routine throughout simulation and treatment. Large volume hairstyles or facial hair can make it more difficult to accurately position you for treatment if your treatment is to the brain or head and neck region. Any drastic changes in hairstyle or facial hair can change how well your treatment mask fits.

Simulation Day

Your simulation begins with proton therapy education by one of our nurses and they will tell you what to expect during the simulation appointment. Your primary caretaker can join you for the education portion of your simulation. You will be asked to put on a gown. If you are receiving IV contrast, the nurse will place an IV in a vein. The nurse will also obtain any needed lab tests that can be done on-site, such as checking your kidney function or performing a pregnancy test. The nurse will also explain possible side effects of treatment you may experience, how to manage those side effects, and review your day-to-day treatment and weekly treatment check processes.

At the completion of your education appointment, you will be introduced to your Radiation Therapist who will be performing the CT simulation. Before beginning the procedure, you will be asked to verify your name and date of birth, and a photo will be taken and placed on your chart. Based on your area of treatment you may need to remove shoes, glasses, hearings aids, dentures and/or jewelry.

During your CT simulation, radiation therapists will identify the optimal position for your daily treatment and capture CT images of your treatment site from this position.

The radiation therapist will be creating custom devices enabling a reproducible setup for your daily treatments, molded around or near the treatment site to help keep the area in the same position during treatment.

At the end of your simulation, the radiation therapists will provide you with a date and time for your first day of treatment. The remainder of your treatment appointments will be scheduled and managed by your radiation therapist.

If you are scheduled for an MRI simulation, that will take place after the CT simulation. The MRI Technologists will review MRI consent documentation with you and escort you directly to the MRI scanner. IV contrast is commonly used in MRI as well and there are no contraindications to having CT & MRI contrast in one day. At the completion of your MRI, you may have a brief follow-up with your dietician, social worker or financial navigator.

Once all appointments are completed you will be free to depart from the center with your first-day appointment card in hand. The average timeline from simulation to start of treatment can be 10-15 business days but it is ultimately based on guidance given by your physicians. During this period, your physician works closely with the dosimetry and physics team to build and quality assure your customized treatment plan.



STEP 3 TREATMENT

First Treatment

Before your treatment can begin, it's important that you follow any instructions you were provided at the time of simulation. This also applies to all subsequent treatments. This will include:

- ✓ Allowing adequate travel time so you can arrive on time and be relaxed for your treatment.
- ✓ Wearing comfortable clothing and footwear similar to what you wore on simulation day.
- ✓ Making certain you have not applied any lotions, gels or creams to your skin in the area that is being treated within four hours prior to the start of your treatment.

This may also include:

- ✓ Having your hair styled in the same manner as on your simulation day.
- ✓ Following any dietary instructions or restrictions provided for your simulation day.
- ✓ Following any bowel preparation instructions provided for your simulation day.

You will arrive at the proton center and check in at the front desk. You will be escorted from the front desk to the treatment level, which is located one floor below the lobby via the elevator or stairs.

Upon arrival at the treatment level, you will check in at the front desk. After completing check-in, you will be directed to a waiting/changing room to await the start of your treatment. In this space, you will find a restroom, lockers, a beverage station as well as magazines, Wi-Fi access and a television to allow you to prepare for your treatment and wait in comfort. The proton center offers male, female and family waiting/changing rooms to accommodate your needs. You will be gowning in the same manner for treatment as you did for simulation. If you require your caregiver to assist you with mobility or gowning, please let the front desk know when you check in for your first appointment.

Once the treatment room is ready for you, a radiation therapist will come to escort you from the waiting/changing room to the treatment room. Once inside the treatment room, your experience will generally include the following.

Before Treatment



An **introduction with the radiation therapy team** who will be treating you and a general overview of what you will experience for your first treatment.



Answers to any final **treatment-related questions** that you may have prior to the start of treatment.



You'll be asked **what type of music you would like to listen to** (if any) in order to help you relax during the experience.



Physically positioning you on the treatment table for accurate delivery of your treatment.



Completing initial **daily imaging of your treatment area** while on the treatment table. Radiation Therapists will be with you in the treatment room during this phase to ensure you are in the same position as when you were simulated.



Evaluation and approval of your imaging and positioning will be performed by a Radiation Oncologist prior to treatment delivery. This is done outside of the treatment room.

During Treatment



The delivery of your treatment will **frequently require movement** of the gantry and treatment table. Do not be alarmed by any shifting movement of the table as this is normal.



While your treatment is being delivered, the radiation therapists are able to see and hear you at all times using a **two-way intercom and camera system**.



Upon completion of your treatment, the **radiation therapists will re-enter the treatment room** and remove any positioning accessories from around you. Occasionally, they will update the marks on your mask or body which we want you to retain during your entire course of treatment.



Your treatment is complete and you will be assisted from the table.

After Treatment



You will be provided with a printed copy of your **daily treatment schedule** going forward.



You are then **directed back to the waiting/changing room** to get dressed.



From here, you are either **free to leave** for the day or will be advised to report to the 2nd floor for your **weekly On-Treatment Visit**.

We'll see you tomorrow for your next treatment

At your first treatment, you will be given the schedule for the remainder of your treatments, which may or may not be the same time as your first treatment and may be subject to change.

Please note that one beam is shared across five rooms, meaning we can only treat one patient at a time. Some days the beam will be available immediately after you are positioned. Some days you may have to wait for another patient to complete their treatment before the beam is directed to your room. Please be assured that even though your time on the table may vary day to day, our system and therapy team takes great care to ensure you are receiving the correct dosage and treatment each time.

STEP 4 ON-TREATMENT WEEKLY VISIT (OTV)

While you are receiving treatment, you will see your care team once a week. The purpose of the on-treatment weekly visits is to ensure you are tolerating the treatment well and to manage any side effects that you may be experiencing. After completing your treatment for that day, you will proceed to the 2nd floor and check in at the 2nd-floor clinic desk. A few things to note:

- ✓ Each week during treatment, you will have forms to complete which are available on Vision Tree Optimal Care. These forms must be completed before your on-treatment weekly visit. If you have not filled these out in advance, you may fill them out on an iPad or kiosk at the center.
- ✓ A nurse or medical assistant will obtain vital signs, perform an initial assessment of your side effects and communicate to your providers.
- ✓ You may see an advanced practice provider or resident physician as part of your on-treatment visit. You will frequently see your radiation oncologist. Occasionally, you will see a different radiation oncologist. All of our radiation oncologists are capable of addressing your needs during your on-treatment weekly visit and all are committed to working closely with each member of your care team to ensure seamless, coordinated care.
- ✓ If your treatment machine happens to be running behind schedule, you may be directed upstairs for your on-treatment weekly visit prior to treatment. After the visit, you would then proceed downstairs to the treatment level to receive your treatment.

Quality Assurance (QA) Scans

As part of our standard practice, some patients undergo periodic quality assurance scans. These are usually CT scans but may also include MRI. These are not “diagnostic” scans and therefore no radiology report is

generated. Instead, the team uses the scans to check that the proton treatment plan is still meeting the goals defined by your doctor. The evaluation process can take 24-48 hours to complete. Sometimes, adjustments must be made in the treatment plan, for example, if there is a lot of tumor shrinkage, weight loss, swelling or other changes. Generally, your radiation therapy team will escort you to the Imaging Suite to accomplish the QA scan after your daily treatment. The scan will be similar to your original CT or MRI simulation but will be shorter in duration.

STEP 5 TREATMENT COMPLETION & FOLLOW UP

For many patients, completing their course of proton therapy is a significant and profound milestone. Many patients chose to celebrate this moment by ringing our graduation bell on the 1st floor. You may wish to invite family, friends, caregivers or others to share the experience. Patients chose to mark the occasion in their own way. It is your moment and we will support you however you choose to celebrate.

At your last on-treatment weekly visit, you will receive a plan of care for next steps from your treating radiation oncologist. We look forward to seeing you back to check on your recovery and response to treatment, and on future follow-up visits.

Patient Support

At the Emory Proton Therapy Center, we are here to support you every step of the way. During your treatment, our team is available to assist you with many of your personal and logistical needs. Whether it's helping you feel at home in the Atlanta area, making a restaurant reservation to celebrate your treatment graduation, or suggesting activities for you, your family or friends while you are in treatment, we are here to ensure that your experience is as positive as possible.

Transportation and Housing

If you would like to receive more information about your transportation or housing options, a social worker and/or patient experience manager will be available to meet with you concluding your consultation or via phone at

WE PROVIDE

- ✓ Lodging recommendations
- ✓ Transportation recommendations
- ✓ Recommendations for Atlanta-area attractions and activities
- ✓ Recommendations for Atlanta-area amenities
- ✓ Recommendations for complementary services and therapies

a later time. Please call 404-251-2690 to set a meeting time or let someone on the clinical team know that you are interested in receiving more information.

Insurance Coverage

We understand that the insurance and financial process can be overwhelming. We will work with you to provide a clear understanding of your insurance benefits and potential financial responsibilities with treatment. Our financial team will review any annual deductibles and annual out-of-pocket expenses outlined in your insurance plan or financial plan. If your insurance changes or is going to change during the course of treatment, please advise our team.

PATIENT MEDICAL BILLING PROCESS

Prior to your initial appointment, your primary and secondary insurance are verified by a member of our billing team. If your plan is out of network with our center, your initial appointment may be billed under out-of-network benefits. Patients are financially responsible for their annual deductible, annual out-of-pocket costs and any co-insurance that may apply to overall treatment. If your physician recommends proton therapy and you wish to proceed with treatment, our financial team will initiate a pre-authorization with the insurance company. The insurance process can vary considerably, but it can take up to 28-30 business days to receive a determination.

APPEAL PROCESS

For many insurance carriers, an initial denial is anticipated. After a denial, a peer-to-peer review with your physician is often requested. A peer-to-peer review is when a physician from the insurance company contacts your physician at the proton center to discuss the insurance company's policy on proton therapy. Depending on the company, the peer-to-peer review may also provide your physician with an opportunity to explain why proton therapy is recommended in your care. For many insurance carriers, the peer-to-peer process results in another denial.

If coverage for proton therapy remains denied following the peer-to-peer, the financial team will continue to a first-level appeal of the denial. Your physician will complete a letter of medical necessity that further explains why proton therapy is the recommended treatment for you. The letter includes scientific data that supports the use of proton therapy. If the insurance company continues to deny coverage, a second-level appeal is initiated, often with a comparative treatment plan showing the relative advantages of proton therapy compared to the best available X-ray-based radiation plan. If the second-level appeal is denied by insurance, we will proceed to the final appeal.

The final appeal is an external review. The external review is completed by an outside medical service separate from your insurance company. All data submitted is reviewed. If the external review is denied, your physician will contact you to discuss alternative treatment options and next steps.

Each step takes time and our team will keep you informed throughout the process. Once the insurance company approves the patient for proton therapy, you will receive a call from our team notifying you of the approval and a call from the scheduling team to schedule your next appointment.

PAYMENT POLICY

Our financial team is required to collect payment at the time services are rendered. We accept Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, debit cards and wire transfers. We assist with a variety of co-insurance payment options and offer a financial assistance program for qualified patients.



Parking and Directions

The Emory Proton Therapy Center is located at 615 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30308. The main entrance to the parking deck and valet parking is located on Ponce De Leon Avenue NE. If you are using GPS, please use 81 Ponce de Leon Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30308 as your destination.

For patients traveling from across the nation or around the world, the Emory Proton Therapy Center is 10 miles from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and is just minutes from I-75/85. It is served by public transportation with the closest MARTA train station located at North Avenue.

PARKING

There is complimentary valet parking available as well as covered parking attached to the building.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

MARTA, the local transit system, provides bus service and rail line service near the proton center with the closest station located at North Avenue. Visit itsmarta.com for bus and rail schedules.

DIRECTIONS

Take I-85 North to exit 249B (Pine St NE) in Atlanta.

Take a left on Peachtree Street NE.

Take a right on Ponce De Leon Avenue NE.

The entrance to the Emory Proton Therapy Center will be half a block on your right.

From I-75 South, I-85 South or US 400 South, follow signs for I-85 South.

Take I-85 South to exit 249D (North Ave NE) in Atlanta.

Take a left off ramp onto North Ave NE.

Take a left on Peachtree Street NE.

Take a right on Ponce De Leon Avenue NE.









The entrance to the Emory Proton Therapy Center will be half a block on your right.

RIDESHARING

For those using Uber or Lyft, please enter “Emory Proton Therapy Center” in the destination address bar or use 81 Ponce de Leon Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30308.



LEGEND

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Emory Proton Therapy Center |  Building Entrance |
|  Parking Deck |  Emory University Hospital Midtown |
|  Valet Parking |  Bus Stop |
|  Parking Entrance |  Hotel |

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I feel anything during the treatment?

Like other types of radiation treatments, proton therapy is invisible and painless.

Is proton therapy experimental?

No, proton therapy is not experimental. Proton therapy has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration since 1990 and has been used in the United States for more than 50 years.

Do I have to stay overnight?

Proton therapy is an outpatient treatment performed in the Emory Proton Therapy Center. You do not stay overnight.

Why are X-ray images taken daily?

Each patient has low-dose X-ray images obtained at the treatment machine to ensure you are positioned correctly before treatment. Your physician reviews this imaging each day. This is called “image-guided” radiation therapy and is standard when delivering precise radiation like proton therapy.

Does it matter which room I am treated in?

All four of the gantry treatment rooms are functionally identical. During the course of treatment, you may occasionally receive treatment in a different treatment room to help adhere to the day’s treatment schedule, or if there is downtime in your regular treatment room. If you are normally receiving treatment in the fixed-beam room, your treatment cannot automatically be changed to one of the gantry rooms.

Why is my treatment longer some days than others?

It is normal for there to be some daily variation in the duration of your treatment. This occurs for a variety of reasons. Some days it may take longer to ensure you are in the correct position. Some days there may be shorter or longer wait times for the beam to be available for your treatment. Some days the dose is delivered a bit slower or faster from the cyclotron. Please know that the proton center has multiple systems and processes to ensure that you receive the radiation dose that your physician intended each day.

Can I pick a specific appointment time?

The therapy team will do their best to meet your needs and preferences for your daily treatment time. The demand for proton therapy is high and in order to meet this need, we treat patients from early morning until late at night. Please understand there is limited availability in the schedule, but we will do our best to move you towards your desired treatment time as other patients graduate and spots become available. It can take several weeks to settle into your desired schedule and we thank you for your patience and understanding. If you have scheduling requests due to work, school, family obligations or other appointments, please speak with your radiation therapists. When possible, they will make every effort to accommodate your request.

Will I have the same therapists during treatment?

You will typically see the same radiation therapists daily and will likely form a close and sometimes lasting bond with them. If your treatment room or time is adjusted one day, you may meet new therapy team members. Occasionally, you may be introduced to a therapist that is unfamiliar to you, who may be involved in your treatment for the day. All radiation therapists at the proton center are registered and trained radiation therapists capable of delivering any treatment in all treatment rooms.

What if I need to change my appointment time?

Please speak to your therapy team about any adjustments to your treatment time. We are better able to accommodate schedule changes with advance notice.

What happens if I am late?

Please contact your Client Experience Coordinator to inform them of any unexpected delays or if you are unable to come for treatment.

Why do I sometimes have to wait for treatment?

Sometimes the treatment schedule falls behind because of the needs of other patients; perhaps someone arrived a few minutes late or needed extra time. There may also be technical delays or periods of machine downtime, as the proton system is both sophisticated and complex. If the system is not performing within our tight tolerances, your treatment cannot be delivered, and treatment will not be resumed until the team has ensured the system is operating within tolerances. We apologize that there may be occasional inconveniences caused by equipment downtime, which may delay your treatment time or require treatment in an alternate

treatment room. When an issue is identified, it is not always known how long it may take to return the system to normal operations, but we update patients as we are updated on the progress. We recognize that downtime and delays are disruptive. Thank you for entrusting us with your care.

What does it mean to “share the beam?”

The proton center has only one cyclotron, which generates the proton beam. This beam is shared with each of the five treatment rooms. The proton beam can only be treating in one room at a time. Some of the time that you spend in the treatment room is waiting for the proton beam to become available for your treatment.

What happens if there is a holiday?

During holidays when the center is closed, your treatment will be scheduled around these days. In some cases, patients may be treated on a weekend day to ensure treatment continuity. Your doctor will determine if this is necessary and your therapy team will communicate with you in advance.

What happens if there is inclement weather? How are notifications made?

If you are unable to come for therapy because of inclement weather, please notify us as soon as possible at 404-251-2690. In the rare case that we close the center or delay all treatments, your therapist will reach out to notify you.

What happens if I miss or cannot receive treatment?

For most indications, treatment is intended to be delivered five days per week, avoiding unplanned breaks in treatment. If a treatment is missed, it will be delivered on another day. Special schedules are discussed around major holidays. In the event of missed treatments or downtime at the proton center, your treating radiation oncologist will review your treatment plan and recommend if any adjustments may be required to ensure that you continue to receive optimal care for your diagnosis. On the rare occasion of protracted proton center downtime, your physician may recommend continuation of your treatment at another Emory location using our most advanced X-ray-based treatments, before returning to treatment at the proton therapy center.

How long is a treatment course?

Proton treatment sessions are typically delivered daily, Monday through Friday. The total duration of treatment

depends on your diagnosis and other factors and may vary between three to eight weeks, with the average being six weeks of treatment. The number of treatments recommended for your diagnosis is discussed in consultation with your treating physician.

How long is treatment each day?

Most patients spend about 30 minutes in the treatment room each day. Most of that time is spent getting set up for treatment and ensuring everything is aligned properly before the treatment is delivered. The actual treatment is typically delivered in a few minutes.

Can I drive or work during treatment?

Most patients have no restrictions on their daily activity during radiation therapy. Many patients come independently for treatment each day.

What about my other appointments?

Many patients receive concurrent treatments or may have other medical procedures during their course of proton therapy. Our team will coordinate with your other medical providers so that you can receive all necessary treatments.

What if I am not an existing patient at Emory?

If you are already under the care of other specialists outside of Emory, we will partner with them in your treatment, whether they're across town or across the world.

What are the side effects?

All treatments have potential side effects and risks. The potential side effects of treatment depend on your type of tumor and where it is in the body. If proton therapy is a good option for your treatment, it is because the side effects are likely to be fewer and/or the risks lower than other treatment options. Potential side effects and risks of treatment will be discussed during consultation.

What is the success rate?

The chance of controlling the disease or cure depends on many factors including the type of tumor, how advanced the disease is, and often relates to the use and success of other treatments. Clinical experience and published results of proton therapy in the treatment of many different conditions have shown results at least as good as those achieved with other radiation techniques but with potentially fewer side effects or risks. In some tumors, results with proton therapy are among the best reported. Expectations from treatment will be discussed as part of the consultation process.

What if I do not live nearby?

If you live too far away to commute for treatment, our Social Work and Patient Experience team will work with you to identify local housing options.



Glossary and Acronyms

Types of Appointments

XRT	New Start (First Day of Treatment)	NPV	New Patient Visit
OTV	Weekly Treatment Check	RVL	Re-Evaluation
O20	Post-Op, Post Treatment, 20 minutes	E30	Follow-up after Treatment
O30	Post-Op, Post Treatment, 30 minutes	SMC/SIM	Simulation
P90	Procedure, 90 minutes	EDU	Education for Simulation
P60	Procedure, 60 minutes	DXS	Diagnostic MRI
N90	New Patient Consult, 90 minutes	THR	Therapy for Anesthesia Cases
N60	New Patient Consult, 60 minutes	REF	Referral Appointment Place Holder

Locations/Departments

EPTC	Emory Proton Therapy Center	RDCCO	Rad Onc Clifton Office
WCI	Winship Cancer Institute	RDGBI	Rad Onc Glenn Building
EUH	Emory University Hospital	RDO	Radiation Oncology
EUHM	Emory University Hospital Midtown	RadOnc	Radiation Oncology
ESJH	Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital	MedOnc	Medical Oncology
EJCH	Emory Johns Creek Hospital	HemeOnc	Hematology Oncology
MDC	Multidisciplinary Clinic (Head and Neck, Prostate)	NM	Nuclear Medicine
CHOA	Children's Healthcare of Atlanta	ANES	Anesthesiology
RDOPR	Radiation Oncology Proton Therapy		

Positions/Job Titles

CEC	Client Experience Coordinators	MD	Medical Doctor
DOD	Doctor of the Day	NP	Nurse Practitioner
POD	Physicist of the Day	RN	Registered Nurse
PSC	Patient Services Coordinator/Front Desk		

Medical Abbreviations

MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Type of Scan	Tx	Treatment
CT	Computed Tomography; Type of Scan	PCP	Primary care physician
PET	Positron Emission Tomography; Type of Scan	INF	Infusion (Chemotherapy)
NPO	Nothing by Mouth	PSA	Prostate-specific antigen; Type of Lab testing
F/U	Follow-up appointment	BMP	Basic Metabolic Panel; Type of Lab testing
Pt	Patient		
c/o	"Complains of"		
Dx	Diagnosis		
Rx	Prescription		

Miscellaneous

ROI	ROI: Release of Information
TR1	Treatment Room #1
TR2	Treatment Room #2
TR3	Treatment Room #3
TR4	Treatment Room #4
TR5	Treatment Room #5
AHHH	Atlanta Hospital Hospitality House
RMH	Ronald McDonald House
HL	Hope Lodge
ACS	American Cancer Society
BCBS	Blue Cross Blue Shield
UHC	United HealthCare
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
FMLA	Family Medical Leave Act
AUA	American Urological Association
VTOC	VisionTree Optimal Care

EMORY

PROTON THERAPY CENTER






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Entrance around the corner on
Ponce de Leon Avenue NE

 M–F 8am–5pm EST

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