



PATIENT EDUCATION

Anxiety and coping during daily radiation

A plain-language guide for patients and families. Bring this to your visit. It does not replace advice from your clinician.

Daily treatment is a lot

Coming every day, holding still, hearing the machine, and carrying a diagnosis would stretch anyone. Anxiety can show up as a racing heart in the parking lot, tears after a visit, anger that surprises you, or a tight feeling in a mask. This is human. It is also treatable.

What you may notice

- Trouble sleeping the night before simulation or day 1
- Claustrophobia in a head mask or with arms above the head
- Replaying “what if” conversations after you leave
- Family who mean well and ask too many questions at once

What often helps in the vault

Ask for a practice run in the mask. Count breaths with the therapist. Bring a short playlist if the team allows headphones before the beam. A hand signal if you need a pause. Some people do better with a little anti-anxiety medicine before the first few fractions — that is a medical decision, not a weakness.

Where CureRays may fit. Tell us before the mask is made if tight spaces are hard for you. We would rather add time on the schedule than have you suffer in silence. Counseling, chaplaincy, and social work are part of cancer care. Confirm medicines with your clinician.

What you can expect

- Most people feel more at ease after a few sessions when the routine is known
- You can ask for the same therapist when staffing allows
- You may bring one support person to consults; vault rules vary for infection and space



Practical tips

- **One question list.** Write three questions so the visit does not blur.
- **News diet.** Limit late-night searching if it spikes fear.
- **Body.** A short walk after treatment discharges adrenaline for some people.
- **Language.** “I am having a hard minute” is enough to say out loud.

When to call the clinic

- Panic that keeps you from coming in — call us; we can problem-solve same day
- Thoughts of hopelessness or of harming yourself — call 988 or emergency services, then us
- Alcohol or extra pills you are using to get through the day
- Family conflict that is blocking care decisions

Questions to ask

- Can we do a mask practice or add padding?
- Is a short-term medicine reasonable for my first week?
- Who is the counselor or social worker on this team?
- How do I reach someone if I freeze in the parking lot?

How to schedule or learn more

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