Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Proton Therapy Treatment at the New York Proton Center (NYPC)

This information describes what to expect during your proton therapy at the New York Proton Center (NYPC) in New York City.

Proton therapy (also called proton beam therapy) is a type of radiation therapy. It uses charged particles called protons to kill cancer cells. With proton therapy, a device called a cyclotron directs high-energy beams of protons from outside your body to the tumor.

Like other types of radiation therapy, proton therapy kills cancer cells by damaging their DNA. With proton therapy, the beams of protons don't go past the tumor. Proton therapy may cause fewer side effects than other types of radiation therapy. This is because the healthy tissue near the tumor is less likely to be damaged during treatment.

Your proton therapy

MSK patients get their proton therapy at the NYPC. The NYPC's address is:

225 East 126th Street (between Second and Third Avenues)
New York, NY 10035

You may have imaging scans at MSK or the NYPC before you start your proton therapy. You'll also have a simulation appointment at the NYPC.

Before they schedule your simulation, the NYPC will contact your insurance provider. They'll make sure your proton therapy is covered under your insurance policy. This is called prior authorization. Once your insurance provider authorizes your proton therapy, the NYPC will schedule your

simulation visit.

Your simulation will help your healthcare team plan your proton therapy treatments. They'll also make an immobilization device (such as a mask) for you during this appointment. An immobilization device is a device to keep all or part of your body still. You'll use it during your proton treatments to prevent any movement.

Scheduling your treatments

The staff at the NYPC will contact you to schedule your treatments and ask what time is best for you. If you'd like to reach them directly, call 833-697-7686 and ask for the scheduling department. Once you've started proton therapy, you'll get the phone number for your treatment room and the radiation therapist who can help you with scheduling.

During your treatments

In your treatment room, you'll be positioned on a treatment table. You'll use your immobilization device to make sure you're in the exact same position during each treatment.

About your proton therapy treatment team

Your proton therapy treatment team will include your MSK radiation oncologist and your NYPC nurse and healthcare team. While you're getting your treatment at the NYPC, your MSK radiation oncologist will still be your primary (main) doctor. If you see a medical oncologist or other healthcare providers at MSK, you'll also keep seeing them.

- Your **NYPC healthcare team** will teach you about your proton therapy and what to expect during your proton therapy treatments. They'll also watch for side effects and help you manage any side effects you have. Contact your NYPC healthcare team if you have questions or concerns about your care during your proton therapy. Their contact information is listed at the end of this resource.
- Your **MSK radiation oncologist** is in charge of your proton therapy plan and care. They work closely with your NYPC healthcare team. You'll see your MSK

radiation oncologist and other MSK healthcare providers for follow-up care after you finish your proton therapy.

Your role on your proton therapy team

You'll have a team of healthcare providers working together to care for you. You're part of that team, and your role includes:

- Getting to your appointments on time.
- Asking questions and talking with the NYPC staff about your concerns.
- Telling someone on your NYPC healthcare team when you have side effects.
- Telling someone on your proton therapy team if you're in pain.
- Caring for yourself at home by:
  - Quitting smoking, if you smoke. MSK has specialists who can help you quit smoking. For more information about our Tobacco Treatment Program, call 212-610-0507 or ask someone on your MSK healthcare team for a referral.
  - Caring for your skin as instructed.
  - Drinking liquids as instructed.
  - Eating the foods your healthcare team suggests to maintain your weight.

After you finish your proton therapy

Most people get their proton therapy follow-up care at MSK. If you do, it's important to come to all your follow-up appointments.

During your follow-up appointments, your MSK radiation oncologist and other MSK healthcare providers will check how the cancer and your body are responding to your proton therapy. You may have blood tests, x-rays, and other imaging scans during these visits. Your radiation oncologist will also help with any related symptoms, side effects, or concerns.

Write down your questions and concerns before your follow-up appointments. Bring this and a list of all your medicines (including prescription and over-the-

counter patches, creams, medicines, and supplements) to your appointments. You can also call your radiation oncologist or nurse at any time after you finish treatment or between follow-up visits if you have questions or concerns.

Contact information

If you have questions or concerns about your proton therapy treatment:

- Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., talk with a member of your NYPC healthcare team. You can reach them at the following numbers.
    - NYPC radiation oncologist: 833-697-7686
      Name: _____
    - NYPC nursing staff: 646-632-1725
      Name: _____
- After 5 p.m., during the weekend, and on holidays, call MSK at 212-639-2000. Ask to speak with the radiation oncologist on call. Have your home medicines nearby when you call.

If you have questions about your insurance coverage, call the NYPC at 833-697-7686. Ask to speak with the financial clearance team.

If you have questions about your treatment schedule or need to change your treatment appointments for any reason, call the NYPC receptionist at 646-813-1880. They're available Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 10:45 p.m.

If you have questions about bad weather, power outages, or other unusual situations, call the NYPC Hotline at 970-930-8430. It's available 24/7.

If you'd like to talk with someone about your experience at the NYPC, call the NYPC at 833-697-7686. Ask to speak with a patient representative.

Questions to ask your healthcare provider

Before your appointment, it's helpful to write down the questions you want to ask your healthcare provider. Examples of questions you can ask are listed below. Write down the answers during your appointment so you can review them later.

How many proton treatments will I get?

What side effects should I expect during proton therapy?

Will these side effects go away after I finish proton therapy?

What kind of late side effects (side effects that happen after you finish radiation therapy) should I expect after proton therapy?

Space for other questions and answers:

Appointments before your proton therapy

You'll have some or all of the following tests and exams before you start your proton therapy. Your healthcare team will talk with you about which ones you need and why.

Some of these are done to help your healthcare team plan your treatment. Others are done to get a baseline measurement. This measures how you're doing in certain health areas before you start treatment. When you have the same tests and exams during treatment, your healthcare providers will compare the results to your baseline. This helps them see any changes.

Your medical oncologist is: _____ Telephone: _____

Your radiation oncologist is: _____ Telephone: _____

What	Why	Healthcare Provider Name	Where	When
Electro-cardiogram (EKG)	To check your baseline heart rhythm		An MSK location	Before you start treatment
Blood tests	To get baseline results for blood tests you may have during treatment		An MSK location	Before you start treatment and possibly during treatment
Simulation	The planning day for your proton therapy		The NYPC	Before you start treatment
MRIs and other imaging scans	For diagnostics, research, or both		Usually an MSK location	
Nutrition consult	To check your baseline nutrition		An MSK location, the NYPC, or both	

Dental evaluation	To make sure it's safe for you to start treatment and check if any teeth need to be removed before treatment		An MSK location or your local dentist If at your local dentist, fax your results to: _____	Before your simulation
Speech/Swallow consult	To check your baseline swallowing function and to teach you exercises to help prevent problems with swallowing (dysphagia) or opening your mouth (trismus)		An MSK location	
Audiogram	To check your baseline hearing level		An MSK location or your local audiologist	

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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