



AUCKLAND  
RADIATION  
ONCOLOGY

A partnership  
between MercyAscot  
and Southern Cross  
Healthcare



My Treatment Book



## Welcome to Auckland Radiation Oncology

The team at Auckland Radiation Oncology (ARO) know that this is a difficult time for both you and those closest to you; however, you can be confident that your referring specialist has chosen ARO to be part of your care team because we are committed to providing the best possible treatment in a welcoming, calm and comfortable environment.

This booklet belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

Auckland Radiation  
Oncology (ARO)

Ph: 09 623 6046

email: [info@aro.co.nz](mailto:info@aro.co.nz)

ARO Nurse

Ph: 09 623 6585

email: [aronurses@aro.co.nz](mailto:aronurses@aro.co.nz)

ARO Receptionist

Ph: 09 623 6046

email: [reception@aro.co.nz](mailto:reception@aro.co.nz)

ARO Scheduling

Ph: 09 623 5608 or 09 623 6831

email: [admin@aro.co.nz](mailto:admin@aro.co.nz)

ARO Specialist Centre

Ph: 09 630 8510 or 09 623 5814

email: [admin@aro.co.nz](mailto:admin@aro.co.nz)

Other important contacts:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Your treatment book

This booklet contains important information specific to your treatment, so we ask that you take some time to read through this information. It covers what to expect before, during and after radiation therapy treatment. It also includes information about who will be taking care of you, what possible side effects may occur and how to manage these. Should you have any questions or concerns please contact us on 09 623 6046.

It is important you bring this booklet with you during your treatment with Auckland Radiation Oncology (ARO), including appointments with your radiation oncologist, treatment visits and other appointments at ARO. There are note pages at the back of your booklet so you can write special instructions, or raise any questions or concerns you may have during your treatment at ARO.

## Getting started

To ensure that you can start your radiation therapy treatment on time, it's important that you complete the patient registration and patient health history forms (available online at [www.aro.co.nz](http://www.aro.co.nz) or from your Radiation Oncologist) as soon as possible as delays in receiving these forms may result in a delay to the start of your treatment. The Patient Registration and Patient History forms can be downloaded from the ARO website in Patient Pathway, 1. First Specialist Appointment in resources on the right hand side. [www.aro.co.nz/steps/1](http://www.aro.co.nz/steps/1)

You may return the forms back to us by:

- Emailing [reception@aro.co.nz](mailto:reception@aro.co.nz)
- Or delivering them to us in person

Once your registration is complete, a member of our team will contact you with the time of your treatment planning (CT scan - sometimes called CT simulation) appointment if applicable to your personal cancer treatment plan. There is further detail about your simulation planning appointment in this folder.



## Our commitment to you

- You will be welcomed as an individual, by a team that recognises that you have your own special needs and concerns.
- We will endeavour to provide you with treatment times that fit with your schedule.
- All of your treatments will be delivered in a welcoming, discreet and caring environment.
- Every aspect of your treatment will be given to the highest standard of clinical skill, from a team including experienced radiation oncologists (RO), radiation therapists (RT) and physicists who constantly strive to exceed expectations.
- We have patient care specialists (registered nurses and radiation therapists) on site that will address any concerns you may have about treatment side-effects, and they are available throughout the treatment process.
- Support from dietitians is also available to those patients who require it.
- The emotional and psychological effects of cancer can be overwhelming. Please contact us if you would like support from trained professionals.

### Facilities at ARO:



Free parking on-site



Free Wi-Fi



3 treatment rooms (called bunkers)



CyberKnife robotic radiation therapy



Consulting rooms with ensuite examination rooms

### Other onsite facilities:



Café



Laboratory



Pharmacy



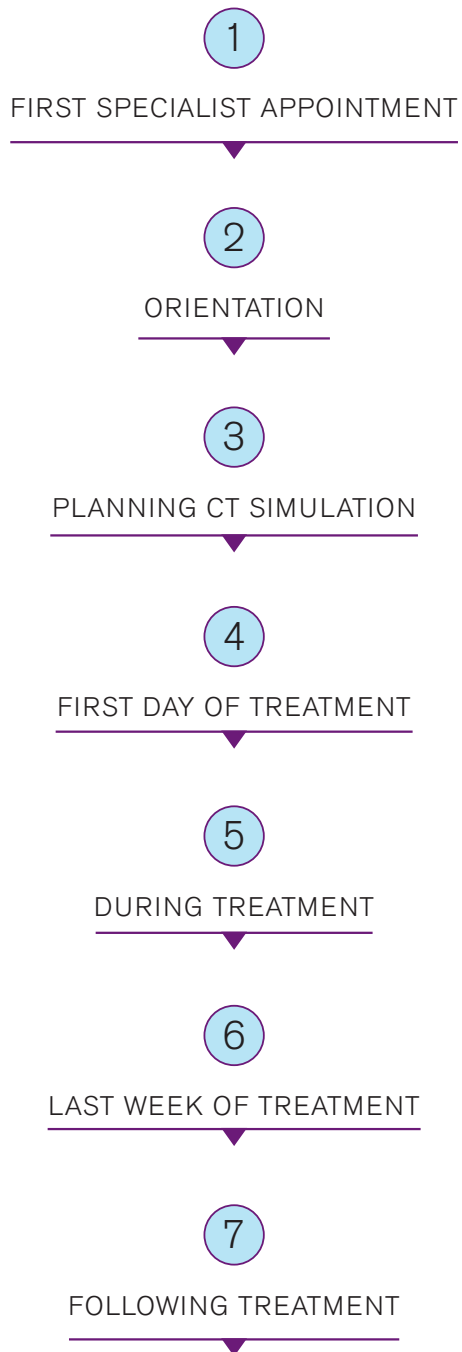
Mercy Radiology



Canopy Cancer Care



## Usual treatment pathway



## 1 First specialist appointment

At the first specialist appointment you will meet with your specialist radiation oncologist to discuss the proposed radiotherapy treatment approach and answer any questions and concerns you may have.

Should you decide to proceed with treatment at Auckland Radiation Oncology (ARO) it will be important to send us completed patient registration and patient health history forms (available online at [www.aro.co.nz](http://www.aro.co.nz) or from your Radiation Oncologist) as soon as possible to avoid possible delay of treatment.

## 2 Orientation

At the orientation appointment a patient care specialist (nurse or radiation therapist) will explain the procedures in more detail and answer any concerns that you might have about ARO or your treatment.

## 3 Planning CT Simulation

Before starting treatment, you will attend a Planning CT Simulation appointment to work out the optimal body position for receiving treatment and provide a detailed picture of the area to be treated.

Specific instructions relating to this appointment can be found at the back of the booklet.

During the days following your orientation and Planning CT Simulation appointment our team of experts (physicists, radiation therapist planners and your radiation oncologist) work together to develop the ideal treatment plan for you. This involves a highly sophisticated planning software system and review process to guarantee safe and effective delivery of treatment. Depending on the site and complexity of the treatment, this stage can take up to two weeks and in some cases longer.



## 4 First day of treatment

You'll need to arrive 10-15 minutes before your allocated treatment time so that we can greet you and to give you time to get changed for your treatment. Please bring an extra layer of clothing (e.g. cardigan or jacket) just in case you feel cold while you wait in the treatment reception area, or you can ask one of our treatment team for a dressing gown.

If you are driving, we recommend you enter the Mercy Hospital main entrance, 98 Mountain Road and park on level 1 of the car park. There is a drop off zone on level 1. Please do not enter your licence plate number into the parking machine, as you will be charged. To be eligible for free parking please provide your registration number at the ARO reception and we will validate your parking. Please walk across the link bridge to Auckland Radiation Oncology (ARO) and report to the ARO reception desk.

The radiation therapy itself is non-invasive and painless, and should take only 10-15 minutes to deliver. Sometimes this can take longer if there is a complex set-up required as for those patients requiring treatment to the head and neck area. Please allow 30-60 minutes for each scheduled treatment visit.

Your specific treatment type will be explained to you by a radiation therapist (RT) on your first day of treatment.



## 5 During treatment

Weekly reviews with your radiation oncologist or one of our patient care specialists will be conducted to monitor any side effects and provide on-going support and advice as required.

### Patient Education Session

Early in your treatment, we will arrange for you to meet with our patient education specialist. We will discuss your treatment plan, explain how the radiation is being applied and possible side effects.

Patients have told us these sessions are very valuable and we encourage you to bring a friend or family member along with you. This is an ideal opportunity to ask any questions.

Remember that our team are available at any time to answer questions or concerns that you may have about your treatment or possible side effects, and if required, the patient care specialists on site can usually see you shortly after you finish treatment for the day.

More information and answers to frequently asked questions are available on page 9 or [www.aro.co.nz](http://www.aro.co.nz). If you have questions or concerns contact us on 09 623 6585 or email [aronurses@aro.co.nz](mailto:aronurses@aro.co.nz) and we will reply to you within one working day (Monday – Friday).



## 6 Last week of treatment

An appointment will be scheduled for you to meet with a member of our patient care team to ensure appropriate care is organised after your last treatment visit. This may include regular monitoring of blood results, appointments for dressings and management of side effects.

## 7 After treatment

Usually 2-6 weeks after your last treatment visit you will meet with your radiation oncologist or the doctor that referred you to ARO. Your GP will also be sent a report about your treatment and will continue to provide for your general health needs.

You are welcome to contact our patient care team to answer questions or concerns that you may have about your treatment or possible side effects up to 2 weeks following your last treatment visit. Please telephone our nurses on 09 623 6585, email [aronurses@aro.co.nz](mailto:aronurses@aro.co.nz) or make an appointment during business hours. Should you require support after 2 weeks, please contact the ARO Specialist Centre on phone 09 623 6587 or email [specialistcentre@aro.co.nz](mailto:specialistcentre@aro.co.nz).

For all other health concerns, please contact your GP, usual healthcare provider or local emergency facility.



## Side Effects

The peak of any side effects experienced may occur around 7 to 14 days after the completion of your radiation therapy. This is due to the cumulative nature of the treatment.

Most side effects only last a few weeks but some of the effects, such as tiredness, may last for a couple of months after the end of your treatment. However, you should gradually start to feel like yourself again.

### **Skin Care**

For **two weeks** after completing treatment we advise that you continue with any special skin care instructions. Please also:

- Avoid direct sunlight on the treated area.
- Avoid hot pools until any skin reaction has completely healed.

The skin in the treatment area will always be more sensitive to the sun:

- If you have experienced a skin reaction do not apply sunscreen to the treated skin until it has completely healed.
- Apply sun-block with a SPF of 30 or higher to any exposed, previously treated skin, if you are going to be out in the sun.

### **Diet**

If your diet has been modified during your radiation therapy treatment we recommend you gradually return to your normal eating habits after seven days, unless otherwise advised by your doctor.

### **Long Term Side Effects**

Most people return to “normal” after completion of their treatment, but a few patients experience some long term side effects. These can develop gradually over several months or years and will be monitored by your specialist team.

## Feedback

We value feedback, and are constantly striving to improve our care and service to patients. Once you have completed treatment we may ask you to fill out a short survey. However if at any time you wish to pass on a compliment or make a complaint please speak to one of our receptionists, or make a complaint in writing to the manager of radiation services who will discuss your concerns confidentially.

## FAQ's

### Should I bring a support person?

Having a friend or relative with you during your treatment can provide a great deal of comfort and support. We understand just how important this is, and welcome you to have someone with you wherever possible. We make every effort to care not only for you, but also your support people and family/whanau. From welcoming them into ARO, to providing them with the information they need, we will help them to play a full role in your treatment journey.

If you have a larger support group, of more than 2 people, we ask that you call us ahead of time, as there is limited seating at ARO and we'd like to ensure that everyone is as comfortable as possible.

### What are my rights as a patient?

All patients and their families have rights governed by the Health and Disability Commissioners Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights Regulation 1996. Auckland Radiation Oncology is committed to delivering your care in accordance with this. More detail on these regulations can be found at [www.hdc.org.nz](http://www.hdc.org.nz) including a translation of these rights into several languages.

### Can I drive?

Under most circumstances there is no problem with driving yourself to and from treatment appointments. Your radiation oncologist will advise you if it's unwise to do so.

### What about my safety?

To facilitate safe and effective delivery of treatment, positioning and holding methods will be used. Lifts and wheelchairs are available for those patients who require them.

The Patient Health History form includes questions relating to your physical status. Please let us know if you need extra assistance so that we can plan your care safely.

### Is ARO smoke free?

ARO is a smoke-free environment to protect the health and safety of our employees and patients.

### Am I radioactive when I receive treatment?

No, the radiation you receive is electrically generated and is similar to having an x-ray. Small doses of radiation are administered daily over a period ranging from several days to several weeks. Your body does not continue to hold the radiation after the daily therapy session ends. You may continue to have normal contact with others.

### How do I know if the treatment has worked?

Your specialist team, which could consist of your surgeon, medical oncologist and radiation oncologist, will continue to see you in follow-up appointments for the weeks, months and years following your course of radiation therapy. They will take careful note of your condition, using clinical examinations and diagnostic tests, to determine how well you are doing. At some point they will either discharge you from their care or offer you further treatment options, depending on your progress.

## Where can I find more information?

In the first instance, we recommend you visit our website [www.aro.co.nz](http://www.aro.co.nz).

Our team is available at any time to answer questions or concerns that you may have about your treatment or possible side effects. You are welcome to contact our patient care specialists on phone 09 623 6585 or email [aronurses@aro.co.nz](mailto:aronurses@aro.co.nz) to make an appointment.

## Am I able to have more than one course of treatment of radiotherapy?

This is possible under some circumstances and depends on whether or not we are treating the same area as previously and what the total dose was to that area. This would be discussed with you by your radiation oncologist should the need arise.

## What are your payment arrangements?

We will provide you with an indication of the costs of your radiation therapy once we have received detail of your expected treatment course.

In most cases we will facilitate the prior approval of your radiation treatment directly with your health insurance provider.

If you are a self-paying patient, prior to starting radiation therapy you will be required to pay the estimated cost of treatment in full. Eftpos, Mastercard and Visa credit card facilities are accepted.

## Parking

Free parking is available onsite in the Mercy Hospital carpark building for ARO patients. The Mercy Hospital car park is through the main entrance off Mountain Road and you may park in any undesignated or ARO designated car park on level 1. To be eligible for free parking, you must provide your vehicle registration number at the ARO reception, so your parking can be validated. Please do not enter your licence plate number into the parking machine in the carpark, as you will be charged. The Mercy Hospital parking is managed by a separate company, and a fine may be issued if your vehicle breaches any of the parking terms and conditions. Free parking (120 minutes) is also available nearby on Mountain Road, Gilgit Road and Almorah Road.



## Where we are



	AUCKLAND RADIATION ONCOLOGY		AUCKLAND RADIATION ONCOLOGY		MERCY SPECIALIST CENTRE
	MERCY RADIOLOGY				CAFÉ
	MERCY PHARMACY				PARKING
	MERCY HOSPITAL RECEPTION				MERCY HOSPITAL CAR PARK (Use link bridge off upper level to access ARO)

## Finding us

A drop off zone is available in the level 1 car park. A short walk along the link bridge leads you from the parking building into the Mercy Hospital building, where you turn right up the short flight of stairs to ARO. There is a lift available if you do not wish to use the stairs.













**Street Address:**

98 Mountain Road  
Epsom, Auckland

**Website:**

[www.aro.co.nz](http://www.aro.co.nz)

**Ph:** 09 623 6046

**Fax:** 09 623 6586

**Email:** [info@aro.co.nz](mailto:info@aro.co.nz)



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