

What You Need to Know about the External Beam Radiation Therapy Access Policy

The Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services agree that all Albertans should have access to radiation therapy within 4 weeks of the date they are ready for treatment (“ready-to-treat” date). If your assigned cancer centre is not able to treat you within 4 weeks, efforts will be made to find another cancer centre in Alberta that can treat you.

What does this mean for me?

Once you and your radiation oncologist have decided that you should have radiation treatment and what your ready-to-treat date is, we will begin the work to start your treatment as close to that date as possible. Every effort is made to start your treatment as soon as possible.

We will talk to you about the policy if we believe you will have to wait more than 4 weeks for your treatment. If your radiation oncologist believes it is medically appropriate for you to have your treatment at another cancer centre in Alberta where you could be treated sooner, the policy gives you the choice to be treated at another centre or wait for treatment at your assigned centre.

We will do everything we can to have you start your treatment as soon as possible, no matter where you choose to have your treatment.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is my ready to treat date?

It is the date that you and your radiation oncologist agree that you can start your radiation treatment. For most patients that is right away. However, some need to wait for other treatment to finish or have other medical or personal reasons their treatment is delayed. If you have questions about your ready-to-treat date, talk to your radiation oncologist.

What does medically appropriate mean?

Because of your treatment or circumstances, your radiation oncologist may feel it is not appropriate for you to have your treatment at another cancer centre. This then means that it is **not medically appropriate** to transfer you to another cancer centre for treatment.

What if I choose to be transferred to another cancer centre for treatment?

Your radiation oncology healthcare team and Alberta Health Services will make all the medical arrangements for your treatment at another cancer centre.

Who pays for my travel costs and accommodation if I choose to go to another cancer centre?

You are responsible for all expenses. If you have concerns about costs, you can contact the RT Access Coordinator at the number listed below. The coordinator can tell you about the financial aid programs or options that might be available for you.

What if I don't want to go to another cancer centre?

It is your choice whether to accept a transfer to another cancer centre or wait for your treatment at your assigned centre. If you choose not to transfer, we will continue to do everything we can to schedule your treatment as quickly as possible

Who can I contact if I have questions about my wait time and my treatment options?

You can contact the Access Coordinator toll free at 1-855-388- 6846 or by email at ACB.RTaccess@albertahealthservices.ca