

Receiving Radiation Therapy to the Breast or Chest Wall

Radiation Therapy may be recommended for patients with breast cancer following surgery in the following situations:

- To the **breast**, where a woman has had a breast-conserving operation.
- To the **chest wall** (or chest wall and reconstructed breast) where a mastectomy has been performed.
- To the **nodal (gland) areas** around or draining the breast, including the axilla (armpit) and/or the supraclavicular nodes (nodes in the base of the neck), and/or (rarely) to the internal mammary nodes (nodes alongside the breast bone).

This sheet aims to provide information specifically for patients receiving radiation therapy treatment for breast and chest wall cancer at Auckland Radiation Oncology (ARO).

Topics include:

- [Special instructions and information related to your treatment pathway](#)
- [Websites and organisations of interest](#)

For more information we encourage you to visit the ARO website www.aro.co.nz which includes. Patients, their family and friends have found the website a useful way to learn more about what to expect before, during and after radiation therapy treatment.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

This information is **not** included in My Treatment Book.

Step 2:

ORIENTATION (pre-treatment planning)

The pre-treatment process will usually require you to have a CT scan. **Please eat and drink normally prior to this scan.**



Before the CT scan, the radiation therapists will determine the best position for you to lie in during your treatment. In most cases you will be lying on an angled board with both arms supported above your head. The therapists will make sure you are as comfortable as possible. The CT scan

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will then be performed with you in this position. Small permanent tattoo marks will be made on your skin to assist in the daily set-up for your treatment.

If you are having your left breast/chestwall treated, you will be considered for our breath hold technique. This technique aims to expand the lung and therefore move the area to be treated further away from your heart. Please refer to www.aro.co.nz treatment techniques to learn more.

Should health problems prevent us using the breath hold technique or you are unable to achieve the required length of time for breath hold you should not be concerned as we are still able to plan your treatment and prevent dose to your heart.

If you are able to get pregnant, remember to be conscientious with protection during this time as pregnancy is not recommended. If you are concerned or suspect you are pregnant when you come in for your initial appointment at ARO or at any stage during the treatment course, please talk to a member of the team.

WEBSITES AND ORGANISATIONS OF INTEREST

Dove House: <https://www.dovehospice.org.nz>.

Located in Glendowie, Auckland. Offers a range of non medical therapies to support you through the challenges of living with a life threatening illness. All services are free of charge.

Breast Cancer Support: www.breastcancersupport.co.nz

Pinc and Steel: <https://www.pincandsteel.com>.

PINC & STEEL was founded on the basis of developing a world-class program for cancer survivorship, which is committed to supporting people affected by any type of cancer through all stages of their treatment and recovery. **Funding can be applied for.**