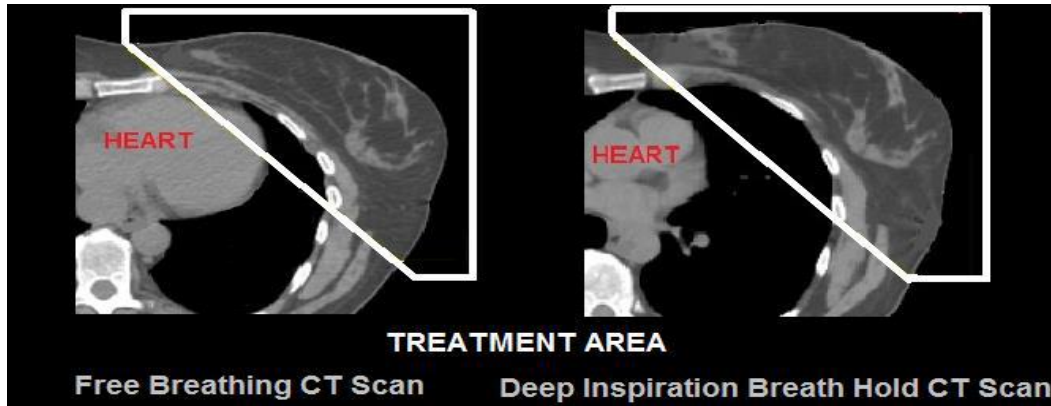




For Patients Receiving Radiation Therapy to their Chest

Breath Hold Technique for Radiation Therapy



Why may I need to hold my breath?

Your heart lies close to the left part of your chest wall and is at risk for exposure to radiation during treatment. Taking a deep breath in and then holding it may push the heart away from the chest wall and out of the treatment area.

Why do I have to practice holding my breath before my CT-simulation appointment?

Practicing holding your breath will help you maintain a proper breath hold during treatment.

Practice is the key to being able to perform a breath hold. Practice helps your treatment to be consistent and accurate.

Is the CT-simulation appointment the only time I will have to hold my breath?

No, if the breath hold technique benefits your radiation treatments, you will need to hold your breath for all the treatments. More information will be given to you at the time of your CT appointment as well as your first day of radiation treatment.

How do I practice?

1. Lie down on your back (as this is how you will be during treatment).
2. Raise both arms above your head.
3. Take a deep breath in and hold. Try to expand your chest fully, without arching your back or raising your shoulders.

- ✓ Practice a few times a day
- ✓ Take a break if you feel light headed or dizzy

If you can hold your breath for 25 seconds during practice, then you will not have difficulties during the CT simulation and treatment.

What if I cannot hold my breath?

If you cannot hold your breath, other measures will be used to protect your heart from the radiation treatment. It is important that you practice holding your breath before deciding whether or not you are able to maintain the breath hold for treatment.

Is there a chance that I will not need to hold my breath?

Yes, if your heart lies away from the chest wall, you will **not** be asked to hold your breath during radiation treatment. We need you to keep practicing your breath hold before your first treatment appointment. You will be notified on the first day of your treatment if you do not need to hold your breath.

What happens if I let go of my breath while the radiation is on?

Nothing! If you stop holding your breath during the radiation the machine will automatically turn off and you will be asked to rest and then try again when you are ready.

We are looking for a consistent pattern in holding your breath. Try to relax as this makes it easier for a smooth consistent technique.

Where do I go for more information?

Below is a YouTube video that explains the need for deep inspiration breath hold. Keep in mind that this video recommends holding your breath for 40 seconds whereas we will only ask for 25 seconds. Also, the video mentions the use of a device called a vac-lock bag – we will not be utilizing one for your appointments.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHjQEozcbdg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6jXkgLnNnY>