

Central Coast Cancer Centre

Radiation Oncology Service

**Radiotherapy information for
patients, families and carers**



All enquiries Phone: (02) 4320 9888 Fax: (02) 4320 9780



Health
Central Coast
Local Health District

Specialist Appointment Information

Date:.....

Time:.....

Location: ☐ Central Coast Cancer Centre, Gosford Hospital

☐ Cancer Day Unit, Wyong Hospital

Radiation Oncologist:

Central Coast Cancer Centre

Phone: (02) 4320 9888

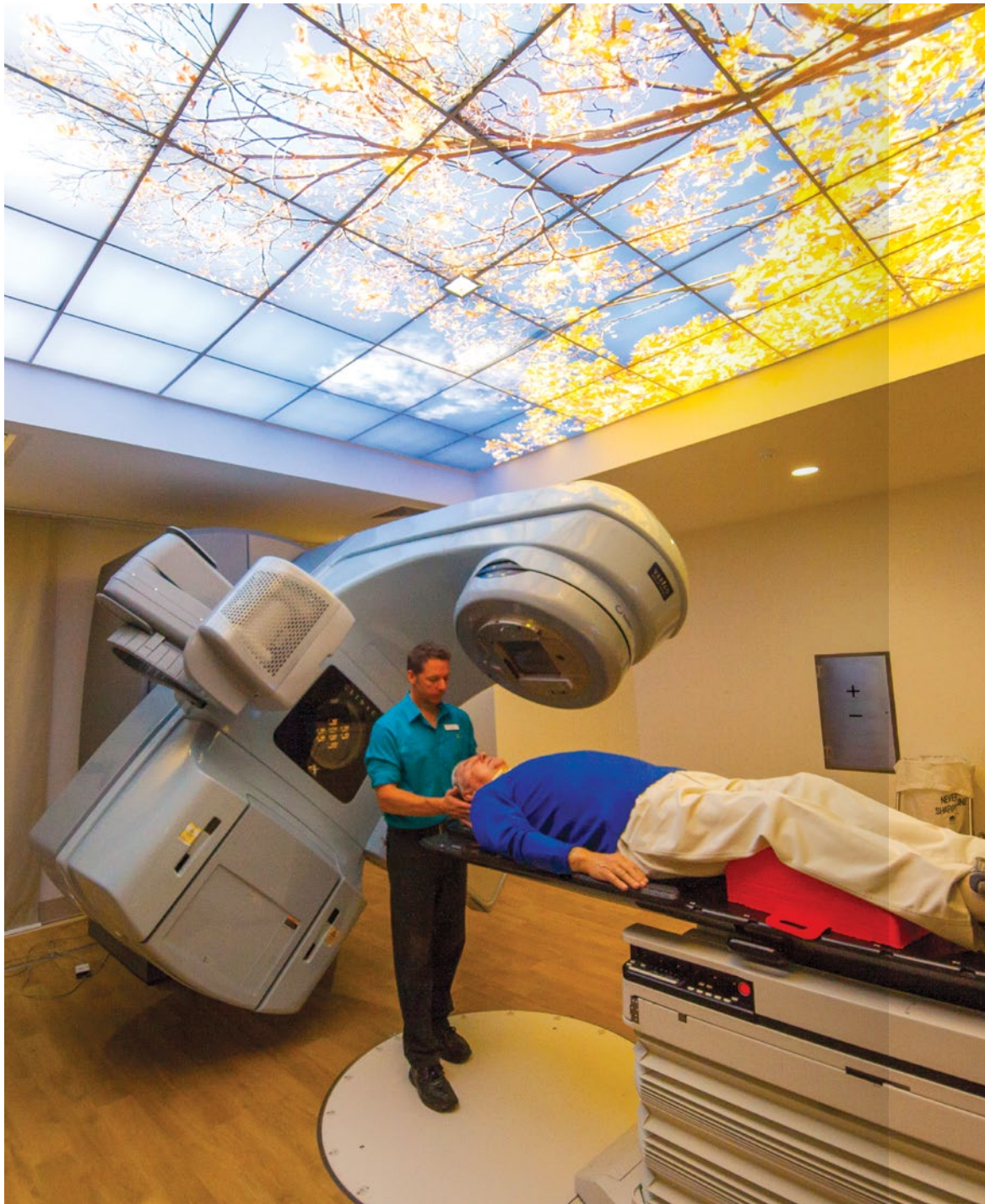
Fax: (02) 4320 9870

Mail: PO Box 361, Gosford NSW 2250



Contents

Introduction	3
About radiotherapy	5
Stages of treatment	6
Radiation oncology treatment team	8
Cancer nurse coordinators	9
Allied health services	10
Support services	12
Volunteers	13
Glossary and recommended reading	14
Transport and parking	15



Introduction

The Central Coast Cancer Centre, located at Gosford Hospital, provides the community with the best possible holistic care – close to home and without the need to travel to Sydney or Newcastle. Radiation oncology services are bulk billed through Medicare, which means no cost to patients.

Set in a peaceful and relaxing environment, the Cancer Centre has advanced technology that provides the highest quality, modern radiotherapy treatments including SABR, VMAT and IMRT (see page 14). It also has specialised machines to treat skin cancers after surgery, or when surgery may not be suitable. The Clinical Trials and Research Department continually improve the treatments on offer, and help patients to access new treatment opportunities.

The radiation oncology service has a team of medical specialists, care coordinators, nurses and allied health professionals and administrative staff. They discuss the treatment of each patient as a team, ensuring that the best possible support and care is provided.

Being located at Gosford Hospital, the Cancer Centre has easy access to a full range of specialist services such as radiology, pathology, surgical, allied health and community health services. It also has a wellness program – CoastCanCare – which offers a range of programs designed to help patients, carers and families cope with the stress, anxiety, fatigue and pain related to cancer treatment.

Some radiation oncology services are available at Wyong Hospital. Please speak to a radiation oncologist at the Cancer Centre for more information.



About radiotherapy

Radiotherapy, also known as radiation therapy, uses x-rays to kill cancer cells and stop them from growing. Radiotherapy is a safe and effective treatment for many types of cancer.

Half of all people with cancer may benefit from radiotherapy to help cure their cancers or improve their quality of life. Radiotherapy can shrink cancers, and treat cancers that have spread to other areas in the body. This type of treatment relieves pain and other symptoms.

Radiation therapy is different for each patient with cancer. Treatment is prescribed based on several factors, including:

- the patient's general health and personal preferences
- the type, size and location of the cancer
- whether the cancer has spread to other areas of the body
- the intention of treatment, e.g. symptom relief or cure
- whether radiotherapy is used alone or with other treatments.



Radiotherapy is generally delivered daily (Monday to Friday) over several weeks, and may be combined with other cancer treatments. Most radiotherapy treatments are given as outpatients, without causing any pain or requiring time to recover.

Stages of treatment

There are a number of stages to radiotherapy treatment. The team aims to make this process as easy as possible for patients, families and carers.

Referral and initial consultation

Planning session

Treatment

Treatment reviews

Follow-up reviews

Referral and initial consultation

If you need a consultation at the Central Coast Cancer Centre, please speak to your GP or specialist who will send a referral to organise an appointment. If you are having difficulty obtaining a referral or would like a second opinion, please call us on 02 4320 9888 for advice on how to proceed.

You will receive a call prior to your appointment to confirm the date, time and location of your appointment. If you live closer to Wyong Hospital, you may be able to attend a clinic at Wyong instead of Gosford.

Please ensure all recent scans and reports are brought to the consultation appointment.

During the consultation, the radiation oncologist will discuss recommended treatment options, their benefits and possible side effects of treatment. If you wish to have radiotherapy as part of your cancer treatment, an appointment for a radiotherapy planning session will be arranged, usually within a week of the consultation appointment. The radiation oncologist will explain what to expect at the planning session as it varies for different areas of the body, types of cancers, general health and personal preferences.

You are encouraged to ask questions of the radiation oncologist about treatment recommendations.

Planning session

The planning session takes between 30 and 60 minutes. The radiation therapist will take a CT scan of you in a position that is most comfortable and stable. In some cases a dye may need to be injected so they can better see the cancer or important parts of the body. The radiation therapist may also make a mask and other equipment that will be used for the radiotherapy treatments. After the planning session, you return home while the team creates an individual treatment plan for you. This may take up to two weeks to ensure that treatment side effects are minimised.

Treatment

Radiotherapy treatments are painless and given in small doses each day to help minimise side effects. Each treatment takes between 15 and 30 minutes, including preparation time. Depending on the type of treatment, it may take up to eight weeks to complete. There are typically no treatments on weekends or public holidays, and during scheduled machine maintenance. Most patients will not have treatments on alternate Thursdays, while routine maintenance is completed.

You will be provided with a personalised appointment list, with all important dates and times

noted down. The team will try to fit in with your preferred times, however some flexibility is required. Appointment times may also need to change if there are delays or other interruptions.

Please inform staff if you or your carer are working, so that we can minimise disruptions to your work.

Treatment reviews

The radiation oncologists will see you regularly during your treatment to review your progress. This is a good time to ask questions or raise concerns about the treatment. These appointments are made to avoid long waits and appear as 'Weekly Dr review' on the appointment sheet. Nursing staff are available to help or arrange an extra treatment review with the radiation oncologist if needed.

Follow-up reviews

Towards the end of the radiation treatment, the radiation oncologist will discuss a follow-up plan to ensure you have regular check-ups after treatment is finished. Follow-up plans may include appointments at the Cancer Centre, or with local doctors.

If you miss a follow-up appointment, phone the Cancer Centre on (02) 4320 9888 to arrange another time.

Radiation oncology treatment team

The radiation oncology treatment team also comprises of:

Radiation Oncologists:

A team of radiation oncologists provide an expert sub-specialty service for each major tumour type (excluding paediatric oncology). Each tumour type is covered by two Radiation Oncologists who work in partnership to provide expert service to the patients of the CCCC.

Radiation Oncologist sub speciality expertise include:

- breast malignancies
- genitourinary malignancies
- gastrointestinal malignancies
- gynaecological malignancies
- haematological malignancies
- head and neck malignancies
- skin malignancies
- lung and thoracic malignancies
- neurological malignancies.

Radiation oncology nurses

Specialist oncology nurses regularly review patients to help them manage any side effects from radiotherapy. They also provide treatment related information and support for patients, carers and families.

Radiation therapists

Radiation therapists plan and deliver daily radiotherapy treatments and provide patients with information as they progress through treatment. They liaise with the radiation oncologists and medical physicists to ensure safe and accurate radiotherapy treatment.



Cancer nurse coordinators at the Cancer Centre

Cancer nurse coordinators

A team of specialised cancer nurse coordinators are a central point for coordination of your care. They assist by:

- coordinating treatment appointments
- providing information about cancer, treatments and services
- communicating between GPs, specialists and allied health professionals
- facilitating access to home care, community nursing, counselling and financial support services.

Cancer care coordinator	Phone
Apheresis/stem cell	(02) 4320 9635
McGrath Breast Cancer Nurse	(02) 4320 9826
Gastrointestinal	(02) 4320 9824
Gynae-oncology	(02) 4320 9825
Head & neck and lung	(02) 4320 9823
Haematology	(02) 4320 9636
Neuro-oncology and Uro-oncology	(02) 4320 9822

Allied health services

The Central Coast Cancer Centre can refer patients to a range of allied health and support services, which are free of charge. Simply speak to the staff at reception.

Social workers

A cancer diagnosis and treatment can be a time of stress and crisis. Social workers can help patients, families and carers with emotional support, and assist with financial, home, work and legal issues. If ongoing support is needed, social workers can organise community services to assist.

Clinical psychologists

Emotional wellbeing and resilience is important for good health. A clinical psychologist assists patients, carers and families with management of anxiety, depression and emotional adjustment associated with a cancer diagnosis. Longer term psychological support can also be discussed with the psychologist.

Dietitians

The dietitian provides advice to patients on how they can improve their nutrition during and after treatment. They also assist with treatment side effects that may alter a patient's diet.

Speech pathologists

If a patient's swallowing, speech and voice are affected during treatment, a speech pathologist can help. They assist if any side effects impact on eating, drinking or communication.

Other allied healthcare specialists

Staff can arrange referrals to other allied health services at Gosford Hospital, including:

- physiotherapy
- occupational therapy
- lymphoedema management.

If preferred, referrals can also be provided to private allied health providers.

Support services

CoastCanCare Wellness Program

CoastCanCare offers a range of wellness programs designed to promote the wellbeing of patients, family members and carers. Mindfulness, meditation, exercise and music therapy are some of the programs available to help manage stress, anxiety, fatigue and pain. Programs that provide general information about cancer and its treatment are also available.

For more details contact the CoastCanCare Wellness Program Coordinator on (02) 4320 9855.

Carer Retreat

The Carer Retreat is just a short stroll from the Cancer Centre. It is a private and quiet place for carers to relax and re-energise while waiting for patients having treatment.

Guests can find information about supporting others, make use of free phone and internet services, mobile phone chargers and computer, or simply relax and chat. Children are welcome.

For more details contact the Carer Retreat on (02) 4320 5576.

Volunteers

An award winning team of volunteers bring a strong community feel to the Cancer Centre, and support patients and carers by:

- providing a listening ear
- making tea and coffee for people waiting for appointments
- guiding people through the hospital for appointments outside of the Cancer Centre.

Cancer Council Information Centre

A Cancer Council NSW information centre is located in the main foyer of the Cancer Centre. Trained volunteers provide printed materials, internet access and phone numbers to help patients access relevant support services.



Glossary and recommended reading

Here is an overview of some common radiotherapy treatment terms:

IMRT: Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy

An advanced treatment technique that delivers high-precision doses using complex computer-controlled shielding called Multi-Leaf Collimators (MLCs).

VMAT: Volumetric Modulated Arc Therapy

Similar to IMRT, however the radiation is delivered in a continuous rotation or 'arc', with the machine moving around the patient. This can result in much faster treatment times.

SABR: Stereotactic Ablative Body Radiotherapy (SABR)

Uses IMRT or VMAT to deliver a high doses of radiation in very few treatments to small cancers. The radiation oncologist will inform patients if SABR is suitable.

These websites provide accurate information on cancer and radiotherapy:

- **Targeting Cancer**
www.targetingcancer.com.au
- **Cancer Institute**
www.eviq.org.au
- **Cancer Council**
www.cancercouncil.com.au/cancer-information
- **Cancer Australia**
www.canceraustralia.gov.au
- **Canrefer**
www.canrefer.org.au



Transport and parking

Driving

The Cancer Centre has 26 dedicated patient car parks. There is a small fee for car parking when a validated parking ticket and a Cancer Centre permit is displayed. Volunteers provide patients with parking permits on arrival.

Train

The Cancer Centre is conveniently located close to Gosford train station, with a regular complimentary shuttle bus service to the hospital.

Buses

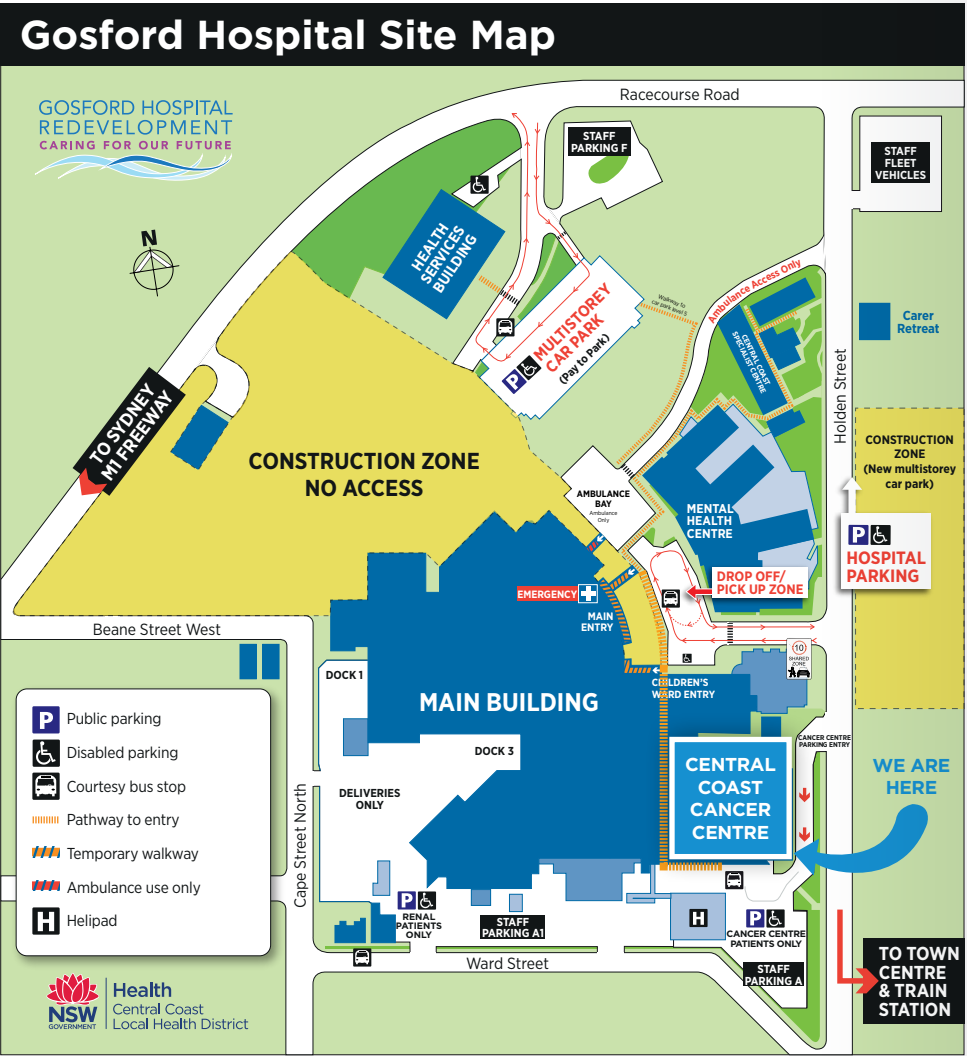
Regular buses and shuttles operate both inside and immediately outside of Gosford Hospital grounds.

Transport services

Several transport providers are affiliated with the Cancer Centre. Staff can assist patients to arrange suitable transport for all appointments.



Central Coast Cancer Centre Site Map



Thank you for your patience and understanding as we transform Gosford Hospital

Central Coast Cancer Centre

General enquires

Phone: (02) 4320 9888

Doctor referrals

Fax: (02) 4320 9780

www.cclhd.health.nsw.gov.au/ourservices/CCCS