

## A message from the Director of ParRTI



A cancer diagnosis can be a scary and overwhelming event. My desire is to do everything I can do to help our patients and their families during the treatment process. The Claude Parrish Radiation Therapy Institute staff is passionate about helping others and creating an environment where healing and support can take place.

The purpose of this brochure is to help answer any questions you or your family might have concerning treatments at ParRTI. While this might not answer every question, I suggest you make a list of questions that you can ask our team at your appointments.

My primary concern is you and the care you receive at ParRTI!

Sincerely,

Jon Burnside

Director of Oncology Services

Claude Parrish Radiation Therapy Institute

North Arkansas Regional Medical Center



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# Understanding Radiation Therapy



Claude Parrish Radiation Therapy  
Institute of North Arkansas  
Regional Medical Center



## - WHAT HAPPENS AFTER TREATMENTS ARE COMPLETE?

You will continue to see benefits from the radiation for about a month after your treatments are complete. You will have a follow up appointment in approximately one month to monitor your progress. During these follow-ups the doctor will examine you and may perform other tests if needed. Please be sure to keep these scheduled appointments. We are always available to answer your questions. Please don't ever hesitate to call with any concerns or needs you may have.

## HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SKIN

- Do not scrub or use soap on the area that is being treated, unless instructed by the therapy team. You may let water run over the area and pat dry.
- You may use moisturizing lotion, but only after consulting one of our team members.
- Avoid sun on the area being treated.
- Avoid hot tubs, saunas, ice packs, or hot pads to affected area.
- Wear loose fitting clothing to avoid rubbing irritated skin.

## WORKING WITH THE HEALTH-CARE TEAM

It is very important that you take an active role in your care. This includes going to all appointments that are scheduled, sharing information such as how you are feeling and any concerns you may have, and most of all asking questions.

## THE RADIATION TEAM



Dr. Craig Olson

**RADIATION ONCOLOGIST**—A doctor who specializes in using radiation to treat cancer. A consult will be scheduled upon referral and you will come in to meet the doctor and discuss your care, at that time a CT will be scheduled to plan your treatment. The CT scan will be done here at Claude Parrish Radiation Therapy Institute. The doctor develops and prescribes a treatment plan for each patient according to their CT scan. The doctor will follow your care very closely and consult with your other doctors on a regular basis. You will also have a weekly visit with him. Although you are scheduled to see the doctor once a week, he will be available anytime that you have an issue, problem, or question.



Jon Burnside



Kim Coker



Shannon Hilliard

**RADIATION THERAPIST**—The therapists work closely with the doctor and dosimetrist to deliver your treatment everyday. They position you for your treatment, direct the machine, and deliver the radiation to the specific site. They are also always available for questions or needs.



Eric Easton

**DOSIMETRIST AND PHYSICIST**— The medical dosimetrist and physicist work closely with the radiation oncologist and the therapist to develop custom treatment plans for the administration of radiation. The dosimetrist calculates the exact dose of radiation you'll receive. He also decides the best shape and angles for the treatment beam. He is like a pharmacist, he "fills" the doctor's prescription of the prescribed radiation.



Michelle Riggs, RN

**RADIATION NURSE**— The nurse works with the whole team to provide nursing care for the patients and support for the family. The nurse is always available to answer any questions or concerns that may come up over the course of treatment. The nurse will explain the possible side effects you may feel and help you manage them. You will be evaluated weekly by the nurse and as needed to assess for problems or possible side effects. The nurse will also assist you with nutritional needs or concerns.



Marita Roach

**PATIENT COORDINATOR**—The coordinator collects medical records from referring doctors, establishes your chart, and works closely with the other team members. She also greets the patient and their family on a daily basis and notifies the therapist of your arrival.

## COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### - WILL I LOSE MY HAIR?

You will only lose hair in the area that is being treated, unless you are also receiving chemotherapy. Depending on the dose of radiation you receive, the hair may grow back after radiation.

### - HOW LONG DO THE DAILY TREATMENTS LAST?

The average treatments last about 10-15 minutes. However some days it will take a little longer for x-rays and port films.

### - DO I NEED TO EAT CERTAIN FOODS?

It is very important to eat as healthy as possible. The

body needs protein to heal. A diet high in protein and high in calories is advised to prevent weigh loss.

Some foods high in protein include: **whole milk, eggs, cheese, meats, fish, poultry, beans, and peanut butter.**

Some foods high in calories include: **whole milk, juice, soda pop, milk shakes, ice cream, puddings, powdered milk, and canned fruits in syrup.**

Most fruits and vegetables are low in calories and proteins but by adding cheese sauces, butter, gravy, oils, or salad dressings you can add calories and proteins.

It is also important to eat at least six meals per day and snacks in between meals.

### - WILL I GET SICK?

The treatment site will determine if you will get sick or not. Each cancer site has different side effects and you may not experience all of them. A common side effect that a lot of patients usually experience is fatigue. The feeling of being weak and worn out is a common side effect usually experienced two to three weeks into the treatment process. Many patients only experience fatigue and no other side effects.

Patients should always let one of the team members know when they begin to experience any symptoms or side effects.

### - WILL TREATMENTS MAKE ME RADIOACTIVE?

External radiation does not make you radioactive. You will still be able to be physically close to friends or family members which include holding children or letting them sit on your lap.