This is a plain text version of the website text that goes with our video about Gamma Knife treatment. Some small changes have been made to support user experience.

Welcome to a new video series by Radiotherapy UK and Amethyst Radiotherapy. The aim of this series is to help prepare you for the experience of Gamma Knife treatment – a type of radiotherapy.

The video below shows each step of the treatment process.

You can add subtitles to the main patient experience video by watching in YouTube and clicking the settings wheel icon in the bottom right-hand corner.

Read the video script below.

Remember that each patient and each treatment plan is different. Your experience may be longer or shorter depending on your diagnosis

Depending on your situation, your treatment team may use a head frame to keep you still, or a mask that is made just for you

If you are a healthcare professional or take part in patient engagement work, please share this resource with your network.

Every treatment experience is unique

Here we have tried to give an overview of Gamma Knife radiotherapy. But every patient has a unique experience of treatment and side effects. To help you prepare, we recommend watching all the videos in this series and asking the different members of your team lots of questions. You may want to write down answers or take a friend or family member with you to appointments if you are too overwhelmed to take in information. Some patients have told us that they felt strong emotions when their treatment began. This is completely normal.

With thanks

This video was created by Radiotherapy UK for our [PIF TICK](https://pifonline.org.uk/pif-tick/) accredited Patients and Families hub, launching in 2024. Our special thanks to Amethyst Radiotherapy for welcoming us to the Queen Square centre in London, and to their treatment team for providing in-depth interviews. A huge thank you to Andy, who worked with us to create the video voiceover.

Further information

There is so much to learn about Gamma Knife radiotherapy. Below we have included links to some further resources that can support your treatment journey.

Learn more about Amethyst Radiotherapy and the conditions they can treat:

https://amethyst-radiotherapy.co.uk/conditions/

Learn more about masks and moulds:

https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/treatment/radiotherapy/external/planning/moulds-masks

Learn more about preparing for cancer treatment, with Jo McNamara:

https://youtu.be/imyCQXlgI6c

This is the plain text transcript of our Gamma Knife treatment video:

A quick warning before we begin: this video shows cancer treatment equipment and uses a model to represent the steps of gamma knife treatment that some people may find triggering.

Hi, my name is Andy, and this video is to help patients better understand what will happen during gamma knife treatment – a type of radiotherapy.

I had gamma knife treatment in 2022 when I was diagnosed with a brain tumour. I now volunteer my time to help cancer patients like me.

Here we can see the patient arriving at the clinic to start their treatment.

You will first meet with your therapeutic radiographer and talk through the plan for the day. You will have your identity confirmed several times by different staff members throughout. And that is completely normal.

Your consultant will talk through the treatment with you and answer any questions before you sign the consent form. It’s important to understand the risks, possible side effects and long-term side effects. Why? So you know exactly what you are consenting to. This is a great time to ask any questions.

At the clinic shown here, patients are typically fitted with lightweight head frames like this. Some clinics use a specially moulded mask instead, which looks like this (pause). Here you can see the consultant and therapeutic radiographer fitting the headframe. To make this more comfortable four injections of local anaesthetic are used– two in the forehead and two at the back.

These numb the parts where the frame is fitted for the rest of the day. It doesn’t take long to fit the frame and you may feel a build-up of pressure around your head that will disappear after a few minutes. From this point, you will wear the headframe until your treatment is finished.

The head frame or mask is needed to make sure treatment is accurate. It holds your head completely still throughout the procedure so that the radiation is focused tightly on the tumour or tumours.

If you have a mask for your treatment, it will be made just for you. Some patients find the mask claustrophobic. If you are worried about this, talk to your team.

I had a mask for my treatment. It wasn’t enjoyable but it wasn’t as bad as I thought. It helped me to know the mask made my treatment very accurate.

Once the headframe is fitted you will be given an MRI scan in another department of the hospital. The treatment will be planned on the images this scan creates. After the MRI you will return to the Gamma knife clinic. Here you will wait as the team plan your treatment. This planning can take several hours and is done by your consultant, a medical physics expert and your therapeutic radiographers.

Once the plan is ready, you will be taken through to the treatment room. Another ID check and your team will help you onto the bed and into position. If you are wearing a mask for treatment, you will wear it from this point until it is taken off afterwards. The team will then pull out the imaging equipment, check you are comfortable, and turn on any music or audiobook you have asked for.

As the they leave the treatment room a loud beeping noise will sound. Then images will be taken as a final check to make sure you are in the right place. The equipment will be close to your head, without touching you, and you might feel the bed move slightly as this happens. Your team will talk to you through an intercom. They can see you on camera to make sure you are ok throughout your treatment.

When it is finished, the team will help you off the bed and remove the headframe or mask. You will have 4 small marks where the head frame has been attached, but these go over time.

You will then be taken to the recovery room until the team agree you can go home.

Feeling tired afterwards is normal, but going back to gentle activities is fine. Patients are not radioactive at any point so it’s safe to spend time with friends and family after.

Remember. Every treatment is unique and every treatment clinic is different. Radiotherapy treatment is designed to fit each patient. So you may have a slightly different experience compared to this video. The other videos in this series show interviews with real life professionals and the part they play. These interviews were created to help you understand what happens during and after treatment, and to empower you to ask as many questions as you want to.

I recovered well from gamma knife, and was soon back doing the things I love. I wish you all the best with your treatment and recovery.

Thank you for watching.

4m09s