

Deep Inspiration Breath Hold (DIBH)

What is Deep Inspiration Breath Hold (DIBH)?

It is a technique where you take a breath in and hold it for up to 20 seconds at a time for radiotherapy treatment to the left breast.

How does DIBH help?

Taking a deep breath inflates your lungs; this can potentially move your heart away from the chest wall and away from the treatment area. If it is a suitable technique for you, we will ask you to hold your breath during the CT planning scan and during each of your treatment sessions.

What happens if I cannot hold my breath?

This technique is not suitable for everyone, for example:

- Some people will not be comfortable holding their breath.
- Some people may not be able to do it for the required length of time.
- Some people may not be able to keep still.

If this is the case for you, the CT planning scan and treatment can be done with you breathing normally. If necessary, your heart will be shielded from the radiotherapy treatment during the planning process.

The most important thing is that you are able to keep still in a position that we can reproduce every time you come for your treatment.

How can I prepare for DIBH?

To help you get used to the sensation you can have a practice at home:

- Lie down on your back and hold your breath for up to 20 seconds.
- Repeat this about 6 times.

The average duration of treatment is a few minutes so you will need to repeat the breath hold a few times for each radiotherapy treatment.



How will I know I am doing it right?

When you attend your CT planning scan, the radiographers will run through the process with you and do some practice breaths with you.

- A small, light plastic box will be placed on you.
- A special camera monitors how this box moves when you breathe.

The radiographers will use this information to guide you as you hold your breath; they may ask you to breathe in a little deeper or a little less.

What will happen during my treatment?

During your treatment sessions, you will be lying in exactly the same position as you were for your CT planning scan: with the small box in the same place on you.

- You will be asked to take a breath in.

The radiographers will use the information from your CT planning appointment to guide you until your breathing cycle is within the same level.

- Treatment will be delivered whilst you are holding your breath.

If during treatment you need to breathe normally, the machine will automatically pause until you are ready to hold your breath again.

- The radiographers will monitor you and talk to you through the intercom from outside the room until the treatment is complete.

Radiotherapy contact details

Telephone: 01225 824853

Monday-Friday 8am-3:30pm

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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656 or 01225 826319