



PATIENT GUIDE

Gamma Knife radiosurgery: my guide for patients

What to expect before, during, and after Gamma Knife radiosurgery.

AT A GLANCE

Anesthesia	None needed; local anesthetic at the pin sites if you need a frame
Head position	Mask for most tumors; frame for facial pain and essential tremor
Total time	A few hours
Radiation delivery	Usually an hour or less
Going home	Same day; please have someone drive you
Blood thinners	No need to stop
Activity	No restrictions

This information is intended as a general guide for my patients, and if you are seeing a different physician, it should not substitute for advice, guidance, or instructions from that physician.

Introduction

Gamma Knife delivers focused beams of radiation to a precise target in the brain, without an incision or an opening in the skull. I use it to treat brain tumors, trigeminal neuralgia, glossopharyngeal neuralgia, sphenopalatine neuralgia, and essential tremor, among other conditions. A radiation oncologist and I perform the treatment together, and it is done at HCA HealthONE Swedish, at 799 East Hampden Avenue, Suite 100, Englewood, Colorado 80113.

Because the treatment depends on your condition, this guide is brief. We will go over the details that apply to you at your appointment.



Before treatment

- The radiation oncology team will arrange a CT or MRI scan in advance of your treatment so that we can plan it carefully.
- You do not need to stop blood thinners.
- The Gamma Knife team will give you instructions about eating and drinking before treatment.
- Please plan to have someone drive you home.
- Please call my office with any questions.

The day of treatment

- Gamma Knife is an *outpatient* procedure, so you go home the same day.
- For most tumors, I hold your head in place with a custom mask that is built in advance. For facial pain and essential tremor, I use a frame instead.
- If you need a frame, I numb the pin sites with local anesthetic first. Placing the frame takes roughly 5 minutes.
- The entire visit, from start to finish, takes a few hours. The radiation itself is usually delivered in an hour or less.
- You will not feel anything during the treatment. It is quiet and painless, and many patients take a nap.

After treatment

- If you had a frame, your pin sites will be covered with Band-Aids. You can remove them the next day, and you can shower the next day.
- You will generally not need any new prescriptions.
- There are no restrictions on your activity.
- It is rare to have any symptoms immediately after treatment. Radiation side effects tend to take months, if not a year, to appear.
- How soon you notice a benefit depends on the condition being treated. We will talk about what to expect at your appointment.

If you are being treated for facial pain

- I recommend that you stay on your medications until your pain has consistently improved for several weeks.
- After that, we will slowly wean your medications one at a time, beginning with the medication that seems to cause you the most side effects.

Follow-up

The timing of follow-up depends on the condition being treated:

- **Trigeminal, sphenopalatine, and glossopharyngeal neuralgia:** About 3 months after treatment.
- **Essential tremor:** About 6 months after treatment.
- **Brain tumors:** Your follow-up timing will depend on the nature of your tumor. We will work together with your oncologist and radiation oncologist on a schedule.

When to call my office

Most scheduling and logistics questions will flow through the HCA HealthONE Swedish radiation oncology department, which you can reach at [\(303\) 788-5860](tel:3037885860).

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, please call 911.

For questions or concerns that are not a medical emergency, you can reach my medical assistant directly at [\(720\) 599-3075](tel:7205993075) or MDMian@carepointhc.com. You can also call the CarePoint Neurosurgery main line at [\(303\) 515-2320](tel:3035152320).

If you or a family member is considering Gamma Knife and has not yet met with me, please consider meeting me in consultation to learn more about your treatment options.

