

**For Patients Receiving Radiation Therapy for Left Sided  
Breast Cancer:**

***Breath Hold for Radiation Treatment Planning***

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**Why may I need to hold my breath?**

Your heart lies close to the left part of your chest wall. Taking a deep breath and holding it may pull the heart away from the chest wall and out of the radiation treatment area.

**Practice holding your breath before your CT simulation  
appointment:**

1. Lie down on your back.
2. Raise both arms above your head.
3. Slowly breathe in, then breathe out, then breathe in, breathe out, then take a comfortably deep breath in and hold.
  - ✓ **Aim for 25-30 seconds**
  - ✓ Practice several times a day.
  - ✓ Take a break if you feel light headed or dizzy.

If you can hold your breath for 25 seconds during practice, then you will not have difficulties during treatments.

**Is there a chance that I will not need to hold my breath?**

Yes, if your heart already lies well away from the chest wall, you may not need to hold your breath during radiation treatment. This will be determined at the time your radiation planning is done.

**What if I can't hold my breath long enough?**

If you cannot hold your breath, you may be asked to breathe normally and every effort will be made to minimize exposure of your heart to the radiation field.