Breast Radiation Therapy Program

University of California, San Francisco
Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center
UCSF Phone Numbers

Radiation Oncology

Radiation Oncology Main Phone Number ............................................................... 415/353-7175
After hours and on weekends, ask to speak to the resident on call.

New Patient Consultation Appointments
phone .......................................................................................................................... 415/353-9807
fax ............................................................................................................................. 415/353-9888

Radiation Reception Front Desk (basement level) ..................................................... 415/353-9929

Primus B Treatment Machine .................................................................................. 415/353-9122

Nurse’s Station
phone .......................................................................................................................... 415/353-9966
fax ............................................................................................................................. 415/353-7068

Administrative Assistants
For Dr. Schechter & Park – Tracy Valerio ................................................................. 415/353-9895
For Dr. Fowble – Rosa Samayoa .............................................................................. 415/353-7181

Nurse Practitioner
Miranda Kramer, RN, MS ......................................................................................... 415/353-9564

Billing Questions
Eric Rosenkrantz ...................................................................................................... 415/353-9946

Clinical Practice Manager
Jeanette Bolanos .................................................................................................... 415/353-4683

Other Helpful UCSF Contact Phone Numbers

Main Hospital .......................................................................................................... 415/476-1000
Medical Records Department .................................................................................. 415/353-2221
Cancer Resource Center ......................................................................................... 415/885-3693
Friend to Friend Gift Shop ...................................................................................... 415/353-7776
Social Worker
Michele Francis, LCSW ........................................................................................... 415/353-7982

Nutritionist
Greta Macaire, RD ................................................................................................ 415/885-7608

Helpful UCSF Internet Sites

UCSF Radiation Oncology ...................................................................................... http://radonc.ucsf.edu
UCSF Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center ............................................................. http://www.ucsfbreastcarecenter.org
UCSF Cancer Resource Center .............................................................................. http://cancer.ucsf.edu/crc
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Welcome!

Thank you for choosing the UCSF Breast Radiation Oncology Program for your care. We look forward to seeing you!

The Breast Radiation Program is based at UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion, 1600 Divisadero St., San Francisco. Patients are seen on the basement level and second floor of the UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center. Radiation treatments are typically delivered in our office on the basement level.

**Hours of Service:** 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**How to contact us:** For new patient appointments call 415/353-9807. To speak to a nurse, call 415/353-9943 during normal hours of service. After hours and on weekends, call 415/353-7175. Ask for the radiation oncology resident on call.

What is Radiation Therapy?

Radiation is an effective means of treating cancer and, in some cases, non-cancerous conditions. Radiation therapy uses high-energy beams to kill cancer cells. Radiation for breast cancer treatment can be given after lumpectomy or mastectomy depending on the circumstances. It may be combined with chemotherapy and/or hormonal therapy.

Why Radiation Therapy?

The use of radiation for cancer treatment began at the turn of the 20th century, shortly after Marie Curie purified radium from pitchblende (one of the main mineral ores of uranium) in 1898.

Radiation kills cancer cells by causing the production of “free radicals”. This process changes the DNA of the cancer cells and prevents them from reproducing. The cancer cells die when they can no longer multiply and the body naturally eliminates them. Healthy tissues are spared the effects of radiation because they can repair the DNA changes unlike the cancer cell. In addition, normal tissues are shielded as much as possible while targeting the radiation to the cancer site.

What to Expect

**Your initial consultation**

Your first visit to a radiation oncologist is called a consultation. Its purpose is for the physician to assess your medical condition and perform a physical examination. Your diagnostic X-ray studies, pathology slides and/or reports will be reviewed to determine if you will benefit from a course of radiation. Other treatment options that may be appropriate for you to consider may also be discussed.

The radiation oncologist will confer with your referring physicians. The expected benefits, risks and outcome of your treatment will be explained.

The initial consultation typically takes one to one and a half hours. It is important that you bring a list of medications you are currently taking (including over-the-counter medicines and dietary supplements) with you as well as the health questionnaire that you were asked to complete.

For patients who do not speak English, an interpreter will be provided by UCSF.

At the time of the consultation, you will meet with the attending radiation oncologist and his or her primary nurse. A resident, who is a physician training to become a board-certified radiation oncologist, may also see you.
You may want to have a family member or friend accompany you to assist in talking with the doctor and help you remember what is discussed. If a decision is made to proceed with radiation, you will receive an appointment to return for the next step - a treatment “simulation” prior to beginning actual treatment.

The consent

Before you begin radiation therapy and after your questions have been answered, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Signing the consent form indicates that you understand the risks and benefits associated with the radiation treatment and that you agree to proceed with the proposed treatment course. This will give you an additional opportunity to ask questions of your physician and review the possible side effects and outcome of treatment.

Simulation

The simulation is the first step in planning your radiation treatment. The purpose is to identify the area to be treated. Before simulation begins, a photograph of your face will be taken for identification purposes. During simulation you will be positioned on a table, usually lying on your back. Custom molds or casts may be used to help you keep this position on a daily basis. The simulation may take up to an hour. Several medical professionals will be present. They include your physician and his or her resident and the simulation therapist(s).

Measurements and X-rays of the area to be treated will be taken to determine the direction of the X-ray beams. The simulator is a machine that mimics the movements of the actual treatment machine but produces diagnostic quality X-rays. The simulation may be performed on a modified X-ray machine called a simulator or a dedicated CT scan simulator or both.

Once the simulation is completed, your skin will be marked with small dots of permanent ink (tattoos) to act as a reference for set up and for future reference should you ever need radiation treatment again. These small dots assist the therapist to ensure accurate daily treatment. The dots are made with a drop of India ink and a small pinprick. They look like small freckles. Since they will not wash off, you may bathe and shower normally during the course of your treatment. If their appearance is bothersome to you, they can be removed by a dermatologist at a later date. However, they serve as a record of your treatment for future reference. We prefer that you do not have them removed.

Treatment planning

The information obtained during the simulation will be used to design a unique treatment for you. Dosimetrists and physicists who specialize in the medical use of radiation are responsible for the planning. Treatment plans are usually very complex and must take into account the area to be treated, the surrounding normal tissues and your specific shape and size. Several plans may be generated and your physician will select the best one. This process may take several days to a week.
The set-up

Once the best treatment plan has been determined and selected, you will return for a trial run or practice session on the actual treatment machine. This process, called a set-up, will take approximately one half hour on a weekday afternoon.

You will be directed to one of four treatment machines. The set-up usually occurs several days to one week after the simulation. At the time of the set-up, you will be placed on the treatment machine in your simulation position.

Several X-rays called port films will be taken to document the path of the X-ray beams. These will be compared to the plans generated by the dosimetrist or physicist. If these are approved by your physician, you will usually begin treatment the following day.

Daily treatment

The specific number of treatments you will receive is determined by your physician based on your type of cancer, its location and what other treatments are planned. Most patients are treated 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, for 5-6 weeks. The weekend permits the recovery of normal cells between radiation treatments. You will be able to come by yourself for the daily treatments. Although side effects can vary between patients, most patients are able to continue with their normal activities.

Appointment times

You will generally have your appointment for treatment at the same time every day. Routine treatments are scheduled between 7 am and 4:30 pm except for holidays.

We try to schedule treatments at times that are convenient for you. If your preferred time is not immediately available, you may take an alternate time or wait until your preferred time becomes available (provided this does not delay your treatment too long). If you must reschedule an appointment, please call us as soon as possible. We understand that emergencies and occasional conflicts may occur. However, it is important that you do not skip any treatments. The dose of radiation is cumulative; each successive dose builds on the previous one. The total dose of radiation and the time over which it is given are extremely important. Once treatments have begun, it is important not to stop or interrupt them unless otherwise medically indicated.

Checking in

When you arrive in the Radiation Oncology Department, check in at the reception desk. The receptionists will let the therapists at your treatment machine know you are here.

You will need to change into a special gown for treatment. We recommend wearing comfortable clothes that are easy to change. Lockers with keys are located in the dressing area for your security and convenience. Once you have changed into your gown, you will be escorted into the treatment room by a radiation therapist who operates the treatment machine. Each machine has two therapists and you will usually have the same team of therapists each day.
**Your treatment session**

Your therapist will place you in the proper position on the treatment table. For the actual treatment, which only takes approximately 10 minutes, you will not see or hear the radiation and will not feel anything. The process is like having an X-ray. It is important to lie still and breathe naturally unless otherwise directed. The treatment machines are fairly large and they move in different directions to deliver your treatment.

Your therapists will not be in the room during your treatment, but they can see and hear you at all times through a TV monitor. Your treatment is also monitored by a “record and verify” system, which makes sure that you receive only the treatment that was designed for you. This system assures the quality and accuracy of your treatment.

Once the treatment session is completed, your radiation therapist will help you off the table and you can get dressed and resume your normal schedule. You are not radioactive and do not need to avoid other people because of your treatment.

Overall you will spend about one half hour in the radiation department on a daily basis. On some days your appointment will be longer than others—for example when you are seeing your physician.

Every five to seven treatments you will have an X-ray called a port film. It is taken during the treatment session to verify your treatment position and the direction of the X-ray beams. It does not evaluate the status of the tumor.

**Weekly visits**

You will see your physician and your primary nurse every week during treatment. They will monitor your progress, help you manage any side effects you may experience and address any of your concerns. This is called an on treatment visit and will occur on a specific day of the week. If you are having a problem and need to see the nurse or physician on a day other than your regularly scheduled day, stop at the nurse’s station.

**Side Effects of Breast Cancer Treatment**

Radiation will not make you feel sick or nauseated like chemotherapy can. The side effects are generally limited to the area of the body that is treated and usually don’t begin until the second or third week of treatment. The most common side effect of radiation to the breast area is a sunburn, redness, tanning or dryness and peeling of the skin. Your skin changes will be monitored weekly. We will advise you of the creams and lotions you need to care for your skin. You may feel tenderness or experience some swelling or heaviness in the treated breast. The radiation may cause inflammation but this is only temporary. Most of the skin changes resolve within a few weeks after the treatment is over.

You may also experience fatigue. It is usually not severe. It does not start until the third or fourth week of treatment and not everyone experiences this. It usually disappears once the treatment is over. It is possible to work during treatment. Whenever possible take time to rest and relax.

Long term side effects or complications of radiation are unusual and usually are related to the area(s) of the body that are treated. Your physician will discuss the risks particular to your case. You may be concerned that radiation will cause another cancer. The risk of developing another cancer because of radiation is very low. The benefit of treatment outweighs the very small risk of another cancer. However, if you smoke it is extremely important that you quit smoking to reduce your risk of lung cancer.
What Will My Schedule for Radiation Be Like?

Typically, breast radiation is delivered every day, Monday through Friday, for 5 to 6 weeks. There are no interruptions except for weekends & holidays. We discourage taking vacations and other time off during the treatment. We try our best to find a time of the day for your treatment that works best for you.

Do’s and Don’t During Treatment

*Things you should do include:*

- Go about your life as usual. If you notice that you are having more fatigue, pace your activities.
- Eat well. There is no special diet for radiation. A single multivitamin daily is okay.
- Have social contact with friends and family members.
- Arrive at your radiation appointments as scheduled.
- If you are having any problems, please tell our staff. We are very concerned about your comfort and experience.
- Do your exercises if indicated.
- Bathe and shower as usual but use a mild soap such as Dove or Ivory. Avoid deodorant soaps and products that are heavily perfumed or contain alcohol.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing preferably cotton, over the treatment area.
- You may need to wear a different bra or no bra during treatment. Switching from an underwire bra to one with a soft band is recommended.
- Keep a cotton T-shirt handy for sleeping. This is especially good when you are applying heavy moisturizers to the area before bedtime.
- Avoid extreme temperatures in the treatment area. Do not use heating pads, ice packs, whirlpools, hot tubs as they can enhance skin reactions.
- Avoid sun exposure. If you must go out in the sun, wear a hat and sun screen lotion. An SPF of 30 is the minimum recommended.

*Things you should not do include:*

- Do not use deodorant on the side of your radiation treatment. Many of these products contain aluminum, which interferes with the radiation treatment. If this is a problem for you, we can prescribe a special deodorant that you use once a week.
- Do not take large doses of anti-oxidants or vitamins. Anti-oxidants can decrease the effectiveness of radiation. You may take one multi-vitamin a day and your calcium supplements. If you would like to take other products, please bring them to your doctor’s appointment so that we can review them. We will advise you if it is safe to take them during your treatment.
- Do not take herbal remedies during radiation therapy as this may decrease the effectiveness of the treatment or increase adverse skin reactions.
• Do not use your own lotions on the area being treated. We will advise you of all the lotions you need during your treatment. In general, please do not put any lotions on your breast area in the 3 hours right before your treatment. Otherwise, this may intensify your skin reaction.

• Do not shave or use hair removing creams under the arm on the side of your treatment. This can cause irritation. If you feel you must shave, use an electric razor and be very careful.

• Do not smoke. Smoking increases your risk of lung cancer and lung inflammation (“pneumonitis”), especially when radiation is given.

Follow-up Appointments

At the end of your treatment, you will receive instructions for further care and a follow-up appointment to see your physician. It is important for you to have regular exams and X-rays to check the results of your treatment. Reports of your treatment will be sent to your other doctors.

The Health Care Team in Radiation Oncology

Radiation oncologist

• He or she is your physician who specializes in the medical use of X-rays to treat people with cancer and various other conditions. This physician must complete four years of college, four years of medical school, one year of general medical training and four years of residency training in radiation oncology and be certified in therapeutic radiology by the American Board of Radiology.

Primary nurse and advanced practice nurse

• Your nurse works with the radiation oncologist and radiation therapists to care for you during your treatment. He or she assists your physician by focusing on education, assessment and symptom management and quality of life issues. Radiation oncology nurses are licensed registered nurses. Many of them have additional accreditation in oncology nursing. Advanced Practice Nurses (Clinical Nurse Specialists and Nurse Practitioners) have completed a Master’s degree program.

Resident

• Your resident, a physician obtaining specialized training in radiation oncology, may also assist your physician.

Radiation physicist and dosimetrist

• The radiation physicist has a master’s degree or Ph.D. in medical physics. The physicists are responsible for the treatment machines as well as the design and implementation of complex treatment plans. Under the supervision of the physicist, the dosimetrist plans the actual treatment and calculates the dose to be delivered as prescribed by the physician.

Radiation therapists

• Your radiation therapists have completed two to four years of specialized training in the delivery of radiation for medical use and are certified in radiation oncology. They operate your treatment machine.
Administrative assistant

- The administrative assistant helps your physician schedule appointments for you and is available to answer your questions and direct you to the appropriate person at UCSF. He or she can help to facilitate communication with your physician or primary nurse.

Social worker

- The social worker is available to help you and your family cope with the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and provide connections to helpful community resources.

What Are the Possible Complications of Breast Radiation?

The short-term and long-term complications are unusual but sometimes do happen. Because of this, it is important for you to know about any potential problems. Your doctor will talk to you about the potential of these risks happening in your particular case. These potential problems include:

Common issues:

- Permanent loss of hair under the arm on the side of treatment.
- Possible increase in fatigue that is temporary. Some people do not experience fatigue while others do. It can sometimes take several months to resolve.
- Darker skin or change in the feeling of the breast. The skin of your treated breast may appear to have a slightly darker pigment or feel a bit firmer than the nontreated breast. The areola (area around the nipple) may change in color as well.

Uncommon issues:

- A spontaneous rib fracture in the area treated. The ribs under your breast will receive some dose of radiation during your treatment. This can make the bone more brittle. Rib fractures are rare and heal like any other fracture. The rib won’t usually break on its own. It usually happens if you have an accident like a fall or have a car accident.
- Development of a rare cancer called sarcoma many years in the future.
- Cancer in the opposite breast. Some particles of the radiation may reach your other breast. This is called scatter. The dose of radiation your other breast will receive is minimal.
- Development of lung cancer. The risk of this is reduced if you do not smoke.

If you receive treatment that includes the lymph-bearing areas (supraclavicular area):

- A nerve injury called brachial plexopathy on the treated side. This appears as a sensation of pins and needles in the affected arm and possibly some weakness. It may occur with radiation to the lymph nodes.
- Irritation of the lung called pneumonitis. This is like pneumonia but is treated differently. It is not caused by infection.
- Lymphedema. This is swelling or fluid retention within your arm. The risk of swelling is increased
with removal of your lymph nodes during surgery. Excessive heat and weight gain are also risk factors in developing lymphedema.

*If you receive treatment to the left breast or left chest wall after mastectomy:*

- There may be a small risk of heart problems years later, above baseline risk.
Breast Cancer Treatment and Lymphedema

What is lymphedema?

Lymphedema is the accumulation of lymphatic fluid in the tissues resulting in swelling of the arm(s) and/or hands. Axillary surgery (dissection or sentinel node biopsy) or radiation to the lymph nodes may cause lymphedema. Lymphedema may occur immediately after surgery, within a few months or several to many years later. Signs and symptoms of lymphedema include a sensation of tightness in the arm, wrist or hand, a feeling of tightness in the skin, rings or bracelets feeling tight or sleeves in your clothing feeling tight on one side. There are 3 stages to lymphedema. The first is mild. In this stage the area affected pits or indents when pressed by the fingertips and stays indented. Usually in the morning the arm or hand is normal or almost normal in size. The second stage is moderate lymphedema and is characterized by a spongy consistency. When pressed by the fingertips, the tissues indent but then bounce back. Stage 3 is severe lymphedema. The swelling is irreversible and the arm or hand is very swollen. If lymphedema is untreated, the tissues become hard and fibrotic and are prone to infection and skin breakdown.

Lymphedema prevention

The skin is a barrier against infection and it is important to prevent infections that can lead to lymphedema. Signs of infection include redness to the arm especially the inner aspect, swelling, increased warmth and fever. You should contact your doctor immediately if you suspect an infection in your arm. If an infection (called lymphangitis) is confirmed by your physician, you will need to start antibiotics.

Do’s for preventing lymphedema

• Moisturize your skin on a regular basis.
• Keep your hand and arm clean. Use mild soaps such as Dove. Avoid deodorant soaps.
• Use rubber gloves when washing dishes or dirty clothes by hand.
• Wear protective gloves when gardening or doing housework
• Wear oven mitts when handling hot foods
• Use an electric razor instead of a safety razor when shaving under the arm.
• Use insect repellents to avoid bug bites on the arm.
• Apply antibiotic ointment (like Bactroban) to any insect bites or torn cuticles or cat scratches.
• Use a sunscreen to protect your arm from sunburn. SPF 15 is the minimum recommended.
• Use a thimble when you sew.
• If you have diabetes, control your blood sugar carefully.
Don’ts for lymphedema prevention

- A major contributor to the development of lymphedema is weight gain. Avoid gaining excessive amounts of weight.
- Don’t smoke. Smoking decreases the flow of fluids in the arm.
- Don’t drink excessive amounts of alcohol. Alcohol causes blood vessels to expand and leak fluid into the tissues.
- Avoid vigorous, repetitive movements against resistance with the affected arm (scrubbing, pushing, and pulling).
- Avoid heavy lifting (more than 12 pounds) with the arm. Do not carry heavy handbags or bags with over-the-shoulder straps on the affected side. Don’t carry heavy objects with the arm down.
- Do not allow blood pressure measurements, injections, vaccinations or blood drawing on the affected arm.
- Do not wear tight jewelry or clothing with tight sleeves on the arm or hand.
- Avoid extremes in temperature (hot tubs, saunas, steam baths, heating pads, hot compresses). Avoid extreme temperature changes when bathing or washing dishes.
- Avoid cutting your cuticles during a manicure.
- If you have had a mastectomy, a lightweight prosthesis is better than a heavy one for lymphedema prevention. A heavy one may put excessive pressure on the lymphatic channels.

San Francisco Lymphedema Therapy Programs

***Please be aware that a physician's referral is usually needed before a therapist can evaluate or treat you and is required by insurance companies for payment. ICD9: 457.1

Julie Wong’s PRO active Clinic
1489 Webster St., Suite 210
San Francisco, CA 94115-3760.
Phone: 415/346-8373
Fax: 415/346-0806
Accepts: Some private insurance, Medicare, cash

St. Mary’s Physical Therapy
WomanKind Comprehensive Lymphedema Program
450 Stanyan St. – 3 West
San Francisco, CA 94117-1079
Phone: 415/750-8151
Fax: 415/750-4930
Accepts: Some private insurance, Medicare, Medi-Cal, cash
Outside of San Francisco
Contact the National Lymphedema Network at 1-800-541-3259
www.lymphnet.org
Any of your physicians can refer you to a lymphedema specialist.

UCSF Resources for Breast Cancer Patients

Art Therapy Program
Art for Recovery provides a safe environment where adults can express the intense feelings that arise in life-threatening illnesses; nurturing the aesthetic sensibilities of patients, visitors, and medical staff at the various campuses of UCSF Medical Center and in the community, and creating a safe haven for patients and staff to be heard, to express their feelings and find support. Projects include patient-created artwork, open studio, The Firefly project, breast cancer quilts, art support groups, SPIRIT project, murals in the clinics, healing through writing and more. Contact Cynthia Perlis at 415/885-7221 or email cynthia.perlis@ucsfmedctr.org.

Cancer Resource Center
The UCSF Ida and Joseph Friend Cancer Resource Center offers a wide variety of resources which promote the wellness of our patients and promote the healing process. Located on the 1st floor of the UCSF Cancer Center, just past the Lobby. Call for more information 415/885-3693. Services provided include, but not limited to:

• **Informational services** – assistance with researching medical diagnoses and obtaining information, workshops, audio and video tapes, consultative planning to facilitate effective communication of your needs with your medical providers.

• **Emotional Support Services** – support groups & emotional support workshops. A peer support program is available; call Mimi Roth at 415/885-7604.
  - LGBT Support Group – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender support group for caregivers of persons with cancer or other life-threatening illnesses. Facilitated by Michele Francis, LCSW 415/353-7982.

• **Lifestyle Enhancement Programs and Services** – exercise classes, meditation and guided imagery classes, nutritional counseling and workshops, writing workshops, knitting gatherings, disability and health insurance counseling sessions.
Education

• **Hereditary Aspects of Breast and Ovarian Cancer Lecture Series**
  
  The Cancer Risk Program at UCSF offers regular, free monthly classes presenting the latest information about genetic susceptibility to breast and ovarian cancer. Although free, an RSVP required. Call 415/885-7779 to reserve a spot. Sessions held in the Lurie Conference Room, 2340 Sutter St., San Francisco. Times and dates vary.

• **Bay Area Breast Cancer Forum** – a regular gathering of health care providers, researchers, patients, patient advocates, friends and families. A lecture including key speakers on topics relevant to breast cancer patients. A light dinner is served. Contact Lauren Metzroth at 415/885-7213 for information or to be added to the email list.

Excercise and Movement Classes

Several Classes are offered through the UCSF Cancer Resource Center. Registration and completion of a consent form are required to participate. Call for more information at 415/885-3693.

• Core and More

• Gentle Yoga

• Healing Through Dance

• Restorative Movement

Friend-to-Friend Shop

The Friend to Friend Store at the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center is a one-stop boutique for cancer patients. Shop with the assistance of trained professionals for protheses, wigs, books on tape, jewelry and sun-protective clothing including hats. We offer patients and friends of the medical center an opportunity to provide hands-on volunteer support as sales assistants and cashiers. See products and order online: http://www.friend2friend.org.

Nutrition Consultation and Services

Individual Nutrition Counseling Services – individual patient consultation are available by appointment with nutritionist, Greta Macaire, RD. Your physician’s assistant can arrange for an appointment for you.

Breast Cancer and Nutrition Seminar – Learn the latest information about breast cancer and nutrition in a small group format (5 patients per group). Offered several times per month; free but registration is required. Call 415/885-3693.

Social Worker

Michele Francis, LCSW is the social worker assigned to the patients in radiation treatment. Michele has an extensive background in social work. If you are having financial, social or psychiatric issues that need attention during your care, please let us know and a social worker referral will be made.
Support Groups

There are many support groups offered through the Ida and Joseph Friend Cancer Resource Center. See Cancer Resource Center section.

Financial Information and Assistance

- **Radiation Oncology Billing Questions** – Eric Rosenkrantz 415/353-9946

- **Breast Cancer Emergency Fund** – If you have trouble paying your bills for basic or medical needs, you may be eligible for financial assistance. You must be a resident of San Francisco or San Mateo Counties, have a letter of diagnosis from your physician and have an income of $2000/month or less. For information or an appointment contact Madelyn Stone, CBEF Program Manager or Client Services at 415/558-6999 extension 8.

- **American Cancer Society** – Limited funds are available to assist with cost of transportation and other needs. Applications for funds can be done via the assistance of our social worker.

- **UCSF Financial Counselors** – Counselors available from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. to discuss your billing and payment issues. Call 415/353-1966.

Obtaining copies of your medical records

Requests for medical records must be received in writing at the Medical Records Department. A fee may be associated with obtaining your records. A copy of the medical records release/request can be obtained from the Radiation Oncology Department or by contacting the medical records department directly at 415/353-2221.

Transportation

If you have difficulty traveling to your radiation treatments, please let us know. There may be assistance that can be offered to you including volunteer rides through the American Cancer Society, transportation funds or through the Radiation Oncology Department itself. Our social worker can help you find the best options available. Michele Francis, LCSW can be reached at 415/353-7982.
Website Resources

National Breast Cancer Organizations

• **American Cancer Society** – www.Cancer.org
  Provides a range of information on all types of cancer. Topics such as prevention, screening, diagnosis, staging, and types treatments are covered in good detail. National helpline 800/227-2345. The local chapter may have additional resources such as assistance with travel expenses. This website contains a vast amount of information, a treatment option tool to assist in informed decision making and online shopping for hair loss and mastectomy products. Some Spanish materials available.

• **BreastCancer.org** – http://www.breastcancer.org
  This is a general breast cancer information and networking website. The information is well organized, making it easy to search for relevant information. There are discussion forums, an online chat room and Ask the Expert Online Discussions. This site focuses on coping with the symptoms of breast cancer, your day-to-day experiences and presents information on lowering your breast cancer risk.

• **CANCERCare** – www.CancerCare.org
  A nonprofit service that helps patients and families find support services. Provides good information on financial resources that are available to cancer patients and their families. Free oncology social workers available by phone 800/813-HOPE (4673) English and Spanish.

  Oncologist-approved cancer information provided by the American Society of Clinical Oncology. Provides information about clinical trials, considerations in accepting complementary and alternative therapies, managing side effects of treatment and much more. There are downloadable Podcasts on many topics. English and Spanish.

• **ClinicalTrials.gov** – www.clinicaltrials.gov
  A service of the National Health Institute. Easy to search and find all types of clinical trials across the country. Includes a description of the study, contact information and eligibility requirements. No need to register or provide personal information.

• **FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered** – http://www.facingourrisk.org
  A website centered on improving the lives of individuals and families affected by hereditary breast and ovarian cancer. Provides resources and information for women with hereditary or genetic breast cancer, a variety of publications and brochures, online chat rooms and discussion boards. Helpline 866/824-RISK (7475)

• **KIDSCOPE** – http://www.kidscope.org
  Resource for families and children with a parent who has cancer. Kemo Shark comic book available for free download, helps kids to better understand their parent’s treatment. They also have a DVD in English and Spanish called My Mom Has Breast Cancer: A Guide For Families. One copy per family is available free of charge upon request. English and Spanish.

• **Living Beyond Breast Cancer** – http://www.lbbc.org
A national organization founded by a radiation oncologist to provide information, support and to improve the quality of life for patients diagnosed with breast cancer. They offer audio recording from conference, printed education materials, a quarterly newsletter and on-line updates from publications in the medical community. English and Spanish.

- **RT Answers** – http://www.rtanswers.org
  The American Society of Radiation Oncology (radiation oncologist’s) patient-directed website which provides information related to radiation treatment. This website has information about the diagnosis of breast cancer and the types of radiation used in it’s treatment.

- **Sisters Network Inc.** – http://www.sistersnetworkinc.org
  A national African American breast cancer survivorship organization. Provides education and outreach specific to the African American community. San Francisco affiliate 415/310-3207.

- **Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foudation** – http://ww5.komen.org
  A national organization with a global initiative. This website provides easy to find education materials from prevention and diagnosis through treatment and survivorship. There is an excellent section on complementary therapies with many references.

- **Young Survival Coalition** – http://www.youngsurvival.org
  National organization designed to support young women (women < 40 years old) with a breast cancer diagnosis. Includes blogs, links to local chapters, events, advocacy, information and education.
Local Breast Cancer Organizations

- **American Cancer Society** – www.cancer.org
  Provides a range of services and support groups to patients and their families. Assists with lodging for patients traveling over 100 miles for treatment. Helps patients find protheses, accessories, and wigs. Road to Recovery programs help ambulatory patients with transportation to and from appointments. To find local services online, input your zip code and the website will direct you to your local chapter. San Francisco 415/394-7100, Oakland 510/832-7012, San Rafael 415/454-8464

- **Bay Area Breast Cancer Network On Line** – www.babcn.org
  A local Bay Area nonprofit that provides support, advocacy, educational forums and couples workshops. Support groups available in San Jose. English 408/261-1425 or for Spanish 800/986-9505

- **BAYS: Bay Area Young Survivors** – http://baysnet.org/index.html
  The local chapter of women with a diagnosis of breast cancer age 45 and younger. Calendar of local events, peer support and meetings, links to other resources. Their support group meets two Sundays of every month.

- **Breast Cancer Connections** – http://www.bcconnections.org
  Based in Palo Alto, Breast Cancer Connections offers a variety of support groups led by social workers and/or therapists. This group features workshops and classes on a range of topics, a lending library that is open daily and a buddy program that helps connect patients in similar situations. Their staff is also available to assist with personalized health information searches. Helpline available 9–5 M–F, and 1–5 on Saturday 650/326-6686.

- **BreastCancerTrials.org** – https://www.breastcancertrials.org
  A type of registry with information about breast cancer trials. Breast Cancer Trials.org is based in San Francisco. Participants must register and create an online profile with personal health background which helps match trials and new participants. This website has information about participating in a clinical trials, questions to ask your doctor when considering enrolling in a trial and how trials have contributed to improving breast cancer treatment over time.

- **Charlotte Maxwell Complementary Clinic** – www.charlottenaxwell.org
  A state licensed clinic that provides free complementary and alternative treatments to low income women with breast cancer. Services include acupuncture, massage, and Chinese and western herbs. Offices in Oakland and San Francisco 510/601-7660.

- **Circulo de Vida** – http://www.circulodevida.org
  Latina breast cancer support and resource center. Provides several support groups including one for your mothers and another for men, among others. They offer counseling services, Spanish language education materials, Spanish version of the Look Good-Feel Great program and many other services. Located in the Mission District of San Francisco 415/648-9423. English and Spanish

- **Shanti** – http://www.shanti.org
  Shanit’s Breast Cancer Life Lines project helps provide practical assistance and emotional support to underserved women and men with breast cancer (find emergency financial assistance, meal assistance, and transportation, etc.). Provides free classes on a variety of topics, as well as a resource library. Website also has an extensive list of local support groups. Located on Polk Street in San Francisco 415/674-4781.

- **Sisters Network Inc.** – http://www.sistersnetworkinc.org