

Swedish Radiosurgery Center

Treatment that sounds like surgery – but isn't

Gamma Knife Treatment – What you need to know

Gamma Knife treatment is a process that has several steps, most of which occur all on the same day. We carefully coordinate each step to ensure the very best experience for our patients. After your consultation and before your planning and treatment appointment, our financial counselor will verify your insurance coverage and obtain pre-authorization, if required.

1 Consultation	2a Planning	2b Treatment	3 Follow Up
Typical Time Requirement 60-90 minutes	Typical Time Requirement 2½-3 hours	Typical Time Requirement Usually 1 treatment 30-90 minutes	Typical Time Requirement Multiple appointments (30-60 minutes each)
Overview Initial consultation Discuss Gamma Knife treatment Insurance verification/pre-authorization (usually takes 1-5 days, possibly up to 30 days)	Overview Patient changes into a hospital gown Nurse performs a clinical assessment The neurosurgeon fits the patient with a light-weight frame to stabilize the head CT, MRI and/or angiogram for treatment planning Patient waits in private room, covered by a warm blanket, while the treatment plan is prepared	Overview Patient lies on a table covered by a warm blanket, while listening to music of his/her choice After treatment, the doctor removes the stabilizing frame and ensures all is well, and the patient is able to leave	Overview Patient is scheduled for follow-up visits as determined by his/her doctor(s) to discuss treatment results and track progress
Participating Team Members Patient Radiation Oncologist Neurosurgeon Patient Services Coordinator Scheduler Financial Counselor	Participating Team Members Patient Radiation Oncologist Neurosurgeon Medical Physicist Nurse	Participating Team Members Patient Radiation Oncologist Neurosurgeon Medical Physicist Nurse	Participating Team Members Patient Radiation Oncologist Neurosurgeon Nurse Patient Services Coordinator Scheduler

Gamma Knife Treatment

Step-by-Step Process

Step 1. Consultation

During your initial consultations with a neurosurgeon and a radiation oncologist, you will learn about the various treatment options that are available to you. Once you have decided on Gamma Knife treatment, our financial counselor will verify your insurance coverage and, if it's required, will request pre-authorization. Insurance verification and authorization usually takes 1-5 days, possibly up to 30 days. This is a good time for you to contact your insurance company to ask how much of the bill your health insurance will cover, and how much will be your responsibility.

You can read more about insurance and billing for radiosurgery at www.swedish.org/radiosurgery.

The next step in the process is to schedule the planning and treatment appointment, and for you to arrange with a friend or family member to drive you home after your treatment. Both planning and treatment will take place on the same day. Our scheduler will work closely with you to find a convenient time.

Step 2a. Planning

1. We will suggest you change into a hospital gown.
2. The radiation oncology nurse will talk with you about your medical history and other treatments you have had, and will perform a clinical assessment.
3. The neurosurgeon will fit you with a light-weight, stabilizing head frame. The stabilizing frame ensures your head remains in the same position throughout the procedure.
4. You will have a CT, MRI and/or angiogram. These images will allow your doctor to visualize the area to be treated and the nearby critical anatomy.
5. Using the images and a treatment planning computer, the neurosurgeon will identify the exact size, shape and location of the area to be treated.

The radiation oncologist, neurosurgeon and medical physicist will create a personalized treatment plan that will provide the desired radiation dose to the correct location while avoiding damage to the surrounding healthy tissue. While your treatment plan is being prepared, you will wait in a private room, covered by a warm blanket. We will continually monitor you to ensure you are comfortable.

Step 2b. Treatment

1. During your treatment you will lie on the treatment table, covered by a warm blanket and listening to music of your choice. You will breathe normally.
2. The table will slowly move so the top portion of your head is positioned within the Gamma Knife, which looks somewhat like a CT scanner. Multiple beams of radiation will be delivered at the same time according to your treatment plan.
3. Usually, Gamma Knife treatment takes 30-90 minutes.
4. After your treatment, the doctor will remove the stabilizing frame and ensure all is well, and you will be able to leave.

Step 3. Follow-Up Appointments

1. Your neurosurgeon and radiation oncologist will determine the number of follow-up appointments you will have. Usually these appointments are scheduled for 30-60 minutes.
2. During the months following your treatment, your physician also may ask us to schedule CT, MRI or angiogram imaging to assess the tumor's response to treatment.

