

## Preparation for deep inspiration breath hold (DIBH) radiotherapy treatment

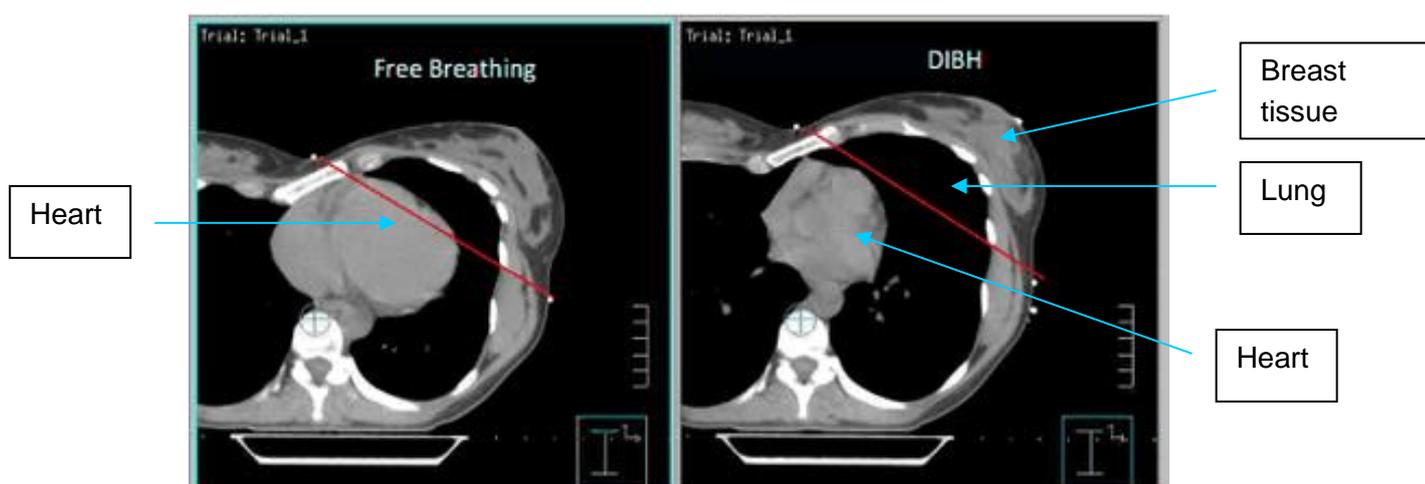
This information is for patients who are about to undergo a course of radiotherapy treatment. Before starting your course of radiotherapy treatment, you will need to practise the important advice contained in this leaflet.

### What is DIBH?

Your oncologist (specialist cancer doctor) has referred you for a course of radiotherapy treatment. The treatment will be delivered during a deep inspiration (breathing in) breath hold.

This technique has the benefit of keeping the chest still, allowing the delivery of more advanced treatment techniques.

In addition, for patients having radiotherapy for left sided breast cancers this has the benefit of expanding the chest, allowing the radiotherapy dose to be given to the breast / chest wall tissue while avoiding the heart (as illustrated below).



### Why is this information important?

The following instructions will help you to prepare for your radiotherapy planning and treatment appointments in the comfort of your own home. This will help to make sure that you can hold your breath for up to 20 seconds.

## What do I need to do?

Your radiotherapy planning CT scan and treatment will be delivered with you lying on your back with both arms supported above your head.

Practise this breathing technique at home on your bed; you should be lying on your back with both arms above your head.

## Deep inspiration breath hold (DIBH)

All breaths should be taken, allowing the chest to expand. Abdominal breathing, as often practised in yoga, would not be suitable for your radiotherapy treatment.

1. Take two slow breaths in and out, expanding the chest.
2. Breathe in and out, then breathe in and hold your breath for 5 seconds.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2, increasing in 5 second intervals, aiming to achieve a hold total of 20 seconds.

Repeating this cycle daily will ensure you are familiar and comfortable with the routine that will be followed during your radiotherapy planning and treatment.

## What happens if I can't hold my breath for 20 seconds?

Do not worry if you are unable to hold your breath for 20 seconds; make a note of the longest time that you can manage, and you will be able to discuss this at your planning appointment, where time will be given to practise this technique with a radiographer (radiotherapy specialist) before your planning scan.

If, after practise with a radiographer, you are still not able to hold your breath for 20 seconds, the radiographer will document your maximum breath hold time. This information will allow the radiographers delivering your treatment to ensure that the treatment is delivered in shorter intervals to allow for your personal breath hold.

You will shortly receive a phone call from the Radiotherapy Department offering you a planning appointment. If you have any questions, please contact the planning team on 0118 322 7872.

For more information about the Trust, visit our website at [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

This document can be made available in other languages and large print upon request.

Radiotherapy Department, July 2020

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