

## Top 10 Questions To Ask Before Beginning Treatment

You've decided that proton therapy is right for you. Now it's time to choose where to receive treatment. Your oncologist may provide you with information and a recommendation. You may also have further questions you'd like to ask in order to solidify your decision. There are more than 40 proton centers across the country and each one is different.

Here are some questions that are important to keep in mind when researching proton therapy centers. To make it easier, we've provided answers for the Maryland Proton Treatment Center (MPTC).



### Does this center have pencil-beam scanning (PBS) in every treatment room?

**Why this is important:** The biggest benefit of proton therapy is its precision. PBS is the most advanced type of proton therapy and there are only a few centers in the world with this technology. It is only a few millimeters wide (the width of a pencil) and treats cancer with unparalleled precision. It's important to know if the proton center you choose has this available in every treatment room.

**MPTC's Answer:** MPTC has PBS in all 5 treatment rooms. Not all centers have PBS, and not all centers with PBS have it in every room.

### Can proton therapy be combined with other treatments for cancer?

**Why this is important:** Many patients require multiple types of treatment depending on the type of cancer and it's location in the body.

**MPTC's Answer:** Yes! Proton therapy can be combined with treatments like chemotherapy and surgery. MPTC is affiliated with the University of Maryland and can ensure seamless care with any additional treatments including but not limited to chemotherapy, Brachytherapy, GammaPod, stereotactic radiosurgery and therapy (SRS + SRT).

### Does this center do a cone beam (CBCT) scan before each treatment?

**Why this is important:** It is important that your body is in the same position to target the tumor every time you have a treatment.

**MPTC's Answer:** Before each treatment, MPTC patients are able to receive a cone beam (CBCT) scan that will compare this scan with the scan taken during their simulation (initial aiming session prior to treatment). This allows for better tumor visualization and more precise treatment. Not all centers have this advanced technology.

### How much experience do you have treating patients with proton therapy?

**Why this is important:** Experience matters in the delivery of this complex, high-precision therapy.

**MPTC's Answer:** MPTC has treated more patients than any other proton center in the region. We are the first and only proton center in Maryland. Our renowned radiation oncologists from the University of Maryland School of Medicine provide a unique level of proton therapy expertise, along with a combined 40+ years of proton therapy experience.



MPTC treatment rooms are spacious

### Does proton therapy cost more than traditional photon radiation therapy?

**Why this is important:** Not all centers have the same cost for treatment.

**MPTC's Answer:** Unlike other proton centers, at MPTC the cost of proton therapy is similar to the cost of conventional radiation therapy. This pricing is based on a cost neutral model that ensures patients have access to the best radiation treatment for their cancer.

### Will proton therapy be covered by my insurance?

**Why this is important:** Due to the higher cost for proton treatment in most centers, insurance will often not cover the cost of proton therapy and/or cause delays in treatment to get approval for insurance coverage.

**MPTC's Answer:** Since the cost of proton therapy is similar to the cost of conventional radiation therapy at MPTC, insurance usually covers the cost. Our insurance approval rate of > 90% is among the highest, if not the highest, in the nation.

### Where were your physicians trained?

**Why this is important:** Again, experience matters.

**MPTC's Answer:** Prior to opening in February 2016, several MPTC physicians received training at the Paul Scherrer Institut (PSI) in Switzerland. PSI is widely considered to be the world leader in proton therapy and has been treating patients since 1984. Over the years, MPTC created a diverse range of training and educational offerings targeted to physicians, medical physicists, dosimetrists, radiation therapists and administrators. More than 200 medical professionals have completed training at MPTC.

### How convenient is it to travel to your center?

**Why this is important:** Your time is precious.

**MPTC's Answer:** MPTC is easily accessible from I95, I695, I83 and located within a 20-minute drive of BWI. Let our free concierge service know if you have trouble finding transportation to the center. We may have resources available for you.

### Does this center offer clinical trials?

**Why this is important:** Clinical trials allow us to discover new and more effective treatments that improve cancer outcomes for everyone diagnosed with the disease.

**MPTC's Answer:** Yes, MPTC is currently participating in a variety of clinical trials for multiple disease sites including base of skull, brain, breast, esophagus, eyes, gastrointestinal, gynecologic, head and neck, liver, lung, lymphoma, pediatric, prostate, sarcoma, skin and spinal cord. We have been named #1 in the United States for accruals to NRG Clinical Trials and #2 Worldwide!



Patient getting scanned before treatment

### What kind of support does your center provide to patients to help make treatments easier to access?

**Why this is important:** Support matters. Managing a cancer diagnosis and the resulting treatment can be one of the most difficult and stressful events in a person's lifetime.

**MPTC's Answer:** Complimentary valet parking is provided to every patient for every appointment at MPTC. MPTC also provides free concierge services, which can include lodging recommendations, navigation and transportation assistance, information on local attractions, restaurants and shopping, and much more. Our concierge team is available to handle the details surrounding your therapy, so you can focus on what matters: getting better. We also have a social worker and child life specialist to assist with other needs.