

Contact Telephone Numbers:

Radiation Therapy Reception: 021-4922492

Superficial Unit: 021-4922601



Information For Patients Receiving Radiation Therapy to the Skin

This information leaflet aims to provide information for patients receiving radiation therapy to the skin. Your doctor may have already talked to you about this treatment but please ask if anything is still worrying you, however small you think it is. Each treatment is tailored to the individual, so your treatment plan may not be the same as somebody else's.

Procedure:

- + The radiation therapists will position you according to the marks on your skin. It is important to lie as flat as possible and try not to help them if they are moving you.
- + Once you are correctly positioned try not to move and breathe as normal.
- + During treatment the radiation therapists will leave the room but they will watch you through a window so if you have any problems just raise your hand.
- + You will not feel anything, but you will hear the machine switch on. The machine will touch the area of skin to be treated, but it will not hurt you.
- + It is essential that you do not move until you are told the treatment has been completed by a radiation therapist.



Radiation Therapy to the Skin

Side Effects:

Radiation therapy is painless and it will be localised to the skin in the treatment area, therefore it is unlikely to make you feel unwell. However there are some side-effects which are associated with your treatment and you may notice one of them developing after your treatment.

Skin Reaction

A skin reaction will occur in the treated area. Your skin will become increasingly sore and red, often weeping or bleeding. During this period a scab will form over the site. As the lesion continues to heal the scab will fall off and may be accompanied by a little bleeding. Do not actively remove or scratch the scab. This is a normal part of the healing process. Try to keep the lesion open to the air but if you feel more comfortable covering the area use a non-stick sterile dressing, though this will need changing daily to avoid sticking.

It is important to take extra care of the skin in the treatment area and certain precautions should be taken:

- + You may gently bathe or shower using warm water.
- + Wash the treatment area using un-perfumed soap such as baby soap. The radiation therapists will advise you as to where the treatment area covers.
- + Pat the skin dry with a soft towel. Do not rub.
- + **Do not** use any other lotions or remedies on the skin, unless the radiation therapy staff recommend them. Certain products may irritate the skin, so please ask us before using anything.
- + Avoid spraying perfume or deodorant on the treatment area.
- + Wear loose comfortable clothing next to the skin, preferably natural fibres such as cotton.
- + Protect the skin from wind, sun and direct heat. A total sunblock will be necessary on the treated area hereafter.
- + **Do not** expose skin to hot water bottles, ice-packs etc.
- + **Do not** rub or scratch the area as this will only exacerbate the reaction.

Sometimes, when the skin feels sore non-prescription pain-killers taken according to the guidelines on the bottles, can be helpful.

If you are worried or are experiencing any discomfort please discuss it with us. We will monitor your skin throughout the course of your treatment.

The radiation therapists need the ink marks on your skin to help set up your treatment. Please do not wash them off. The radiation therapists will go over them as necessary when you attend.

After Treatment:

Radiation therapy is a cumulative treatment, therefore the reactions may persist for several weeks following completion of your treatment. You should continue to follow advice until these side effects have subsided.

The skin will heal gradually, the reaction begins to settle at around six weeks, but this may be longer depending on your skin type. Once your skin no longer feels tender you can return to your normal skin care routine. You may use some moisturiser such as aqueous cream on your treated skin.

There is a possibility that there may be some long term lightening or darkening of the skin in the treatment area and the doctor will advise of this as necessary.

No additional precautions are necessary with your skin, however the treated area will always be more susceptible to sun damage, so remember to use normal protection sun tan cream when in the sun or sunbathing.

On your final day of treatment you will be given an appointment to see the doctor in approximately 6-8 weeks. At this appointment the doctor will discuss your progress.

We are here to help: if you would like more information on any aspect of your treatment, or if you are troubled by anything, please speak to us.