



Information for Patients Receiving a Short Course of Radiation Therapy

After Treatment:

Radiation therapy is a cumulative treatment and builds up on a daily basis so the reactions may persist for several weeks following completion of your treatment. You should continue to follow advice until these side effects have subsided.

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 you are troubled by anything, please speak to us.

Please ring the treatment unit you attended if you have any questions once you have finished your treatment.

Contact Telephone Numbers:

Radiation Therapy Reception: 021-4922492

LA 1: 021-4922479

LA 2: 021-4922478

LA 3: 021-4921307

LA 4: 021-4921308



Short Course Radiation therapy

This information leaflet aims to provide information for patients receiving a short course of radiation therapy. 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 course of treatment is tailored to the individual, so your treatment plan may not be the same as somebody else's.

Daily Procedure:

- + The radiation therapists will position you on the treatment couch using the tattoos 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 on monitors and can hear you on an intercom system 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 move around you but will not touch you.
- + It is essential that you do not move until you are told the treatment has been completed by a radiation therapist.

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.

Side-Effects:

Radiation therapy is painless and is unlikely to make you feel unwell. However there are some side-effects which are associated with radiation therapy and you may notice one or more of them gradually developing over the course of the treatment. Please note that it is rare for one patient to experience all of these side-effects.

Skin Reaction

A skin reaction may occur in the treated area. By the end of the treatment your skin in the treated area will probably be itchy, dry and reddened. Aqueous cream should be applied twice daily. If skin gets worse radiation therapists or nurses will give you a stronger cream to apply to the area.

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.

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

Fatigue

Fatigue is another commonly experienced side effect of radiation therapy. It can range from a mild loss of energy to an overwhelming “bone-tired” feeling that is not always relieved by rest. You may find that you feel more tired as the treatment progresses, so you should rest as much as you need to. Gentle exercise such as walking 2-3 times a week can help reduce fatigue. Do the things that you enjoy and that make you feel good whether it is reading, visiting with friends or spending time outdoors. While many people find they are able to carry on working, others may need time off. You can continue to drive a car if you wish to: many patients are able to drive themselves throughout their treatment. It may take a while after treatment before any tiredness you may have been experiencing to gradually disappear.

It is difficult to get through any course of treatment without feeling low at some point, and it is quite normal to feel up and down during radiation therapy and for several weeks afterwards. Please let us know when things get tough and we will do our best to help you.

It is important to increase your fluid intake while on treatment. Try to increase your daily intake by at least three glasses. Include fluids such as water, milk and juices. Do not include tea, coffee, or caffeine drinks (e.g. coca-cola or lucozade).