



Information for  
patients and  
carers

Xofigo™  
Radium 223 Treatment

## What is a Xofigo™?

Xofigo™ is the name of a drug that contains a radioactive substance called Radium 223. Inside the human body radium behaves like calcium and is taken up by the bones, especially those areas cancer may have spread to. Radium 223 is radioactive and gives off powerful, short-range radiation that can kill cancer cells in the skeleton without harming normal tissues.

## Why am I having this treatment?

If you have prostate cancer there is a chance that it may spread to your bones. Your doctor may have prescribed testosterone lowering treatment to help prevent this happening, but this does not always work. If your cancer has reached your bones they may weaken or even break. When this happens you may experience pain, numbness or have difficulty moving around. Xofigo™ is a radioactive drug that can reduce these symptoms.

## How is the treatment given?

A full course of therapy consists of 6 intravenous injections. One injection is given every four weeks and is usually administered over a period of 1 minute by a radiographer. You must attend for all 6 injections if you are to gain full benefit of the treatment.

## Can you bring a relative or friend with you?

A relative or friend can accompany you to the hospital but usually they will not be allowed into the room when you have your treatment. Please note that we have limited seating and do not have child care facilities, therefore small children should not attend your appointment.

## Preparation for the treatment

Your doctor will arrange for you to have a blood test before each injection is given. If the number of white cells or platelets is below a safe level the treatment will not go ahead. You may eat and drink as normal before each injection.

If you are taking calcium, phosphate and/or vitamin D supplements you should discuss this with your doctor as you may need to stop taking them temporarily.

## Is it safe to have the treatment?

Xofigo™ treatment has been tested on over 600 men in a clinical trial. Approximately 1 in every 10 patients in that trial did experience some side effects.

The most common side effects were:

- Diarrhoea
- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Vomiting
- Decrease in the number of blood platelets (thrombocytopenia)

More serious side effects were found in a smaller number of trial patients (less than 10 patients in every 100).

These were mainly:

- Decrease in the number of white blood cells (leukopenia)
- Decrease in the number of a particular type of white blood cell (neutropenia or lymphopenia)
- Decrease in the number of red & white cells and platelets (pancytopenia)
- Pain and swelling at the injection site
- Increased risk of bone fracture, particularly in those with osteoporosis

Contact your doctor immediately if you notice the following symptoms as they may be signs of blood disorders (thrombocytopenia or neutropenia):

- Any unusual bruising
- Excessive bleeding after injury
- Fever
- If you seem to be catching a lot of infections

## What are the benefits of the treatment?

Although Xofigo™ will not cure your prostate cancer there is evidence to show that men who are treated with it:

- Live longer than those who do not receive treatment
- Have fewer and less painful symptoms related to their bones

## Are there any restrictions after the treatment?

After each injection you are free to drive, return to work and engage in social activities as before. You should be aware that for up to one week after the injection your faeces and urine will be slightly radioactive. During this time you must do the following:

- Avoid spillages of urine (it is best to sit down while urinating)
- Clean up any spillages immediately and flush the paper down the toilet
- Flush the toilet twice after you have used it
- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after each visit to the toilet
- If faeces come into contact with your clothing you must change your clothing immediately and wash the soiled clothing separately
- If you vomit for any reason please contact the department for advice on how to limit potential radiation dose

## What about sexual activity?

It is safe to engage in sexual activity after the treatment, but because the radiation may damage your sperm you are advised to use effective contraception to prevent pregnancy. You must continue to use contraception for up to 6 months after your final injection.

## Travel abroad

Please inform the Radiographer on arrival if you intend to travel abroad within 7 days of your treatment. Radiation monitoring at security in airports or ports may detect some of the radiation you have received during your scan. We will give you a letter that will state what test you have had and this can be used when travelling.

## Contact details

If you have a query about your treatment or you have any other questions, worries or doubts, do not hesitate to contact the Nuclear Medicine department on 01772 522381, prior to your appointment.

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice)

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site

On 31 May 2017 Lancashire Teaching Hospitals became a smoke-free organisation. From that date smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking including Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal.

If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Cantonese:**

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

**Gujarati:**

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઇચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

**Hungarian:**

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

**Polish:**

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

**Urdu:**

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

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