

Information for patients and carers

Radiotherapy to the prostate or prostate bed

How to use Micro Enemas

Decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three horizontal, wavy bands of blue color, with the bottom band being the darkest and the top band being the lightest.

What is a micro enema?

Your consultant has requested that you use **micro-enemas** as part of your prostate cancer radiotherapy plan. Before your course of radiotherapy can begin, we need to plan your treatment carefully and allow us to produce an individual treatment plan that is unique to you. Following this information helps us to produce this plan as the micro-enema helps to make sure that your rectum (back passage) is empty and is therefore as far away from the treatment areas as possible.

It is a very gentle treatment that simply helps you to pass wind or faeces that are about to be expelled. It is not intended to cause you to have diarrhea or to “empty out” your bowel. If you have already opened your bowels on the day of the CT planning scan, the use of a micro enema is still necessary to ensure that the rectum is empty.

Depending on your individual treatment plan you will either be treated with an empty bladder or a ‘comfortably full’ bladder for your planning CT scan and treatment. This will be discussed at an appointment with your clinician prior to your planning CT scan and recorded in your radiotherapy notes.

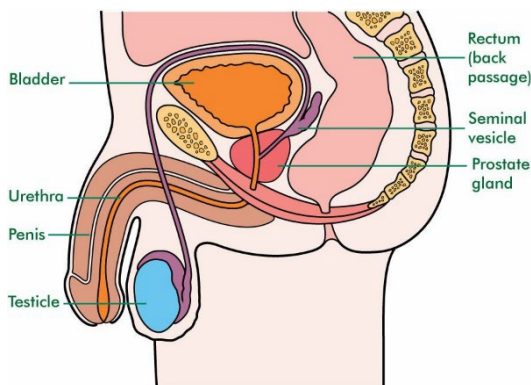


Diagram1<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/prostate-cancer/the-prostate>

When do I use the Micro-enema?

You need to ensure that you use a micro-enema at home the **day before your CT scan** planning appointment, at a time that suits you. You will also need to do a micro-enema one hour prior to your CT scan planning appointment using the toilets located in the radiotherapy department. This is also the case for the **first five radiotherapy treatments**. From the sixth treatment you no longer need to use any micro-enemas unless a member of the radiotherapy team has otherwise advised you.

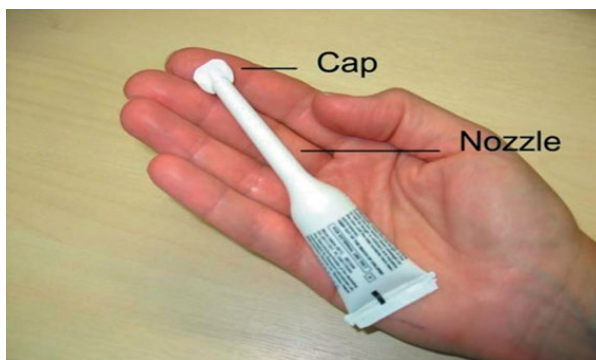
You will need to bring a tube of micro-enema with you when you attend the CT planning scan and for every treatment even if you have stopped using them after treatment number 5. This is so you can use one if your radiographer asks you to. If you are in doubt about anything or have any questions or problems, please let us know as soon as possible.

Where do I get the Micro-enemas from?

You may have been given a prescription for these by your consultant or your specialist nurse or you may have been sent a letter to take to your surgery to ask your GP to prescribe these.

How do I use the Micro-enema?

The Micro-enema is contained in a small tube with a nozzle (see picture below). The medication (5mls) is inserted into your rectum via the nozzle. You will need to do this for yourself following the instructions.



The preparation process

Remember:

You will need to arrive in the radiotherapy department **one hour before** your appointment time. Please use the micro-enema when you arrive in the department, there is no need to wait for instruction.

1. Take an enema tube from the packet and go into the toilet.
2. Pull or twist the cap off the end of the nozzle.
3. Squeeze a drop of liquid onto your finger and smear over the nozzle.
4. Insert the full length of the nozzle into your back passage.
5. Gently squeeze the tube until it is empty.
6. **KEEP SQUEEZING** the tube as you pull the nozzle out of your back passage. (This is to stop the medicine being drawn back into the tube).
7. Throw the empty tube into the bin, then wash and dry your hands.
8. Return to the waiting area and wait for the enema to take effect. (This is usually within 15 minutes but may take up to 30minutes). Most patients only need to visit the toilet once, however please empty your bowels as often as you feel the need to.

9. If after 30 minutes you have not had the urge to have a bowel movement, please go to the toilet and try to do so. Please do not strain and do not worry if you cannot empty your bowels or if only wind is passed – it may be that your back passage is already empty.
10. Empty your bladder at the same time and then return to the waiting area.
11. If you have been instructed to have a comfortably full bladder, then 20 minutes before your appointment you should drink 300mls of water (2 cups from the water fountain). Please drink this as quickly as you can rather than sip it. If it is your first day or you are uncertain where to find the water fountains, please speak to a staff member who will advise you on what to do.

Side Effects

Although micro-enemas do not usually cause side effects, occasionally they may cause a feeling of cramp.

Prolonged use of micro-enemas may cause:

- Irritation of the rectum (back passage).
- Anal discomfort.
- Abdominal pain.
- Allergic reactions (e.g., hives).
- Diarrhea.

Frequently Asked Questions

'Is there anything else I should do to prepare for my treatment?'

- Try to ensure you are well hydrated for at least 48 hours prior to your CT scan and throughout your radiotherapy (drinking around two litres of water-based fluid a day).

- Try to maintain a healthy balanced diet to ensure your bowel motions are regular.

‘Can I do my micro-enema at home?’

We like to request that patients administer their micro-enema within the department as it is in preparation for the **CT scan and treatments 1-5**, in case you encounter any problems or delays. Delays to treatment times will be communicated through boards around the department. If you happen to be running late, do not worry. Please administer your micro-enema as soon as you arrive in the department and speak to a member of staff who can work out what time to deliver your treatment.

‘Do I need to fast before coming to the scan or for my radiotherapy?’

We would strongly encourage you to eat as normal before your appointments, missing meals does not result in an empty rectum.

‘What should I wear for my treatment?’

We are required to access the area we are treating; this makes appointments quicker and easier if you wear loose fitting bottoms such as tracksuit bottoms.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Radiotherapy Reception **(01772) 522923**

Appointments **(01772) 522931**

Transport **(01772) 522295**

If you would like to watch a short information video about radiotherapy, please scan the QR code below.



Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

Stop smoking services

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service/>

Alcohol advice

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/>

Macmillan at Rosemere Cancer Centre

<https://tinyurl.com/38z3d2fy>

Follow us on social media @lancshospitals

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

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

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. 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 this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Department: Radiotherapy

Division: Surgery

Production date: June 2025

Review date: June 2027

Document Code and version: CA240 V4