

Information for patients and carers

Stereotactic Radiotherapy to the Bone (Non-Spine)



Introduction

You have been offered a course of stereotactic radiotherapy (SABR) for the treatment of metastases to bone (not including spine). This leaflet will explain what this means and how we will plan and give you your treatment.

What is SABR and what are the benefits of this treatment?

SABR is a very precise treatment for small tumours in bone where surgery is not an option. It delivers high doses of radiotherapy to the bone whilst reducing side effects to normal tissues as much as possible.

The benefits of this treatment are:

- Increased chance of tumour control compared to standard radiotherapy techniques.
- Higher dose of radiation delivered in each treatment resulting in fewer treatment appointments (usually 3 treatments).

Planning Your Treatment

You may have two planning appointments in the radiotherapy department before starting treatment.

First Planning Appointment

On your first visit you will have a radiotherapy planning CT scan. Depending on exactly where your tumour is, it may be beneficial for us to try and control your breathing pattern. If this is appropriate the staff will discuss this with you and will ensure you are comfortable with this, before proceeding. The first visit may end at this point depending on how you are feeling. If this is the case, we will give you another appointment for your planning CT scan. If, however, you are able to proceed and you are happy to do so, we will ask you to lie on the CT couch. If you think you may have difficulties lying in this position, please inform the staff.

Once you are in a suitable position, a planning CT scan will be taken to accurately plan your treatment.

Second Planning Appointment

Occasionally, a second planning appointment is required on the treatment machine (linear accelerator or linac) – this is referred to as ‘SABR Verification’ on your appointment list. You will be asked to lie in the same position as you were at the time of your planning CT scan. This appointment is to carry out the final checks to ensure that you are as comfortable as possible in the treatment

position; and to check the radiotherapy plan on the treatment machine.

Each planning appointment may take up to an hour. Please bring any regular medication with you if you think you may need it whilst you are in the radiotherapy department. Please also bring any additional medication with you that your consultant may have requested you take e.g. painkillers, inhalers etc.

Having Your Treatment

SABR is usually given over 3 days, on alternate days Monday to Friday normally on an out-patient basis.

For each treatment, you will be asked to lie in the same position as the planning appointments and to keep as still as possible. Scans are taken to check you are in the correct position for treatment. These scans enable us to adjust the position of the couch you lie on to ensure treatment accuracy. The treatment machine will move around you whilst delivering the radiotherapy. During treatment it is important for you to keep as still as possible.

The staff will be monitoring you at all times using closed circuit TV monitor (CCTV). The treatment appointment will take approximately 30 - 45 minutes.

Side Effects of this Treatment

As your treatment progresses you may experience some side effects. For most people the side effects are mild and not everyone will have all of these.

Smoking during radiotherapy has been shown to reduce the effectiveness of treatment and increase side effects. If you smoke, please discuss this with the staff so we can offer you support.

Early side effects (during or up to 12 weeks after your treatment)

- **Tiredness**

You may feel more tired than usual for several weeks after the end of treatment. Rest if you feel tired. If you feel fit enough, gentle exercise can help.

- **Sore, red skin**

You may experience a skin reaction in the area being treated. This reaches a peak after the end of the course of treatment. You can minimise this by following the advice of the radiographers (and our skin care leaflet).

- **Pain in the chest wall (rib cage)**

You may experience pain in the area being treated. This is usually mild and relieved with simple painkillers e.g. paracetamol. If the pain is more severe, please contact your Clinical Oncologist, Specialist Nurse or the radiotherapy department.

- **General Aches and Pains**

Some patients find that they get muscular aches often in the arms, shoulders or in the back caused by lying on the treatment couch and holding either one or two arms up for approximately 30 - 45mins. If you feel any discomfort, please tell the Radiographers.

Late side effects

- **Pain and fractures**

There is a small risk that radiotherapy may weaken the treated bone and could result in a fracture. Radiotherapy close to the chest wall could cause chest pain and fractured rib. You can take simple painkillers. Please let your Oncologist know if you have any pain or suspect you may have a fracture.

- **Skin**

There may be some skin change and swelling underneath as a result of scarring. These effects do not usually require any treatment, although it is best for this to be checked by your doctor/Oncologist.

Your Oncologist will discuss any additional specific early and late side effects of the treatment with you when they discuss the treatment options.

Follow up

- **Appointments:**

You will have at least one review with the Oncologist you saw in relation to your radiotherapy. Longer term follow up and any further treatment will typically continue with your primary Oncologist.

- **Scans:**

Appropriate scans will be carried out to assess response to treatment. The first scan could typically be at least 3 months after treatment.

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

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>

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

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

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

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Division: Surgery

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