NHS
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for patients and carers

Using Micro-enemas

Your consultant has requested that you use micro-enemas as part of your 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. The micro- enema helps to make sure that your rectum is empty; and therefore, as far away from the treatment area as possible.

It is a very gentle treatment that simply helps you to pass wind or faeces that is in your rectum. It is not intended to cause you to have diarrhoea 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.

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. You **may** be asked to use micro enemas three days prior to starting treatment but this will be discussed with you. You will also be requested to use the micro-enema for your **first 5 radiotherapy treatments**. From your 6th radiotherapy treatment, you no longer need to use any micro-enemas unless you have been advised otherwise by a member of the radiotherapy team.

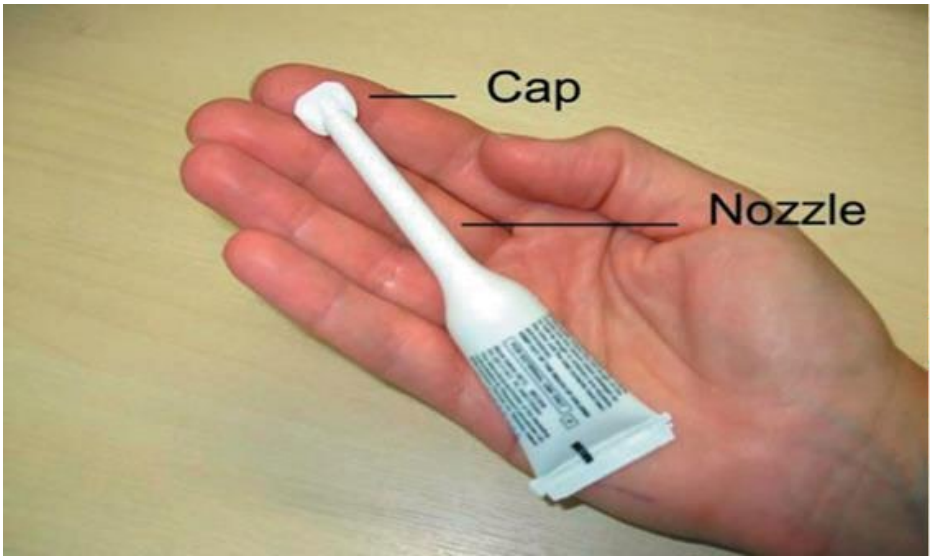
You will need to bring a micro-enema with you when you attend for the CT planning scan and for every treatment even if you have stopped using them after treatment number 5. This is so you can use one if a radiographer asks you to. If you are in doubt about anything or have any questions or problems, 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). 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 30 minutes). 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.

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)
- Diarrhoea

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 2 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 request that patients administer their micro-enema within the department for the **CT scan and treatments 1 to 5,** in case you encounter any problems or delays. Delays to treatment times will be communicated through display boards around the department. If you happen to be late for your appointment, 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 schedule 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.

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 radiotherapy information video, 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/

Macmillan at Rosemere Cancer Centre

https://tinyurl.com/38z3d2fy

(01772) 523709

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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