



Information for  
patients and  
carers

**Dietary Advice during  
Radiotherapy Treatment**

This leaflet aims to provide general dietary advice and useful tips for patients who may need to modify their diet to ease side effects from radiotherapy treatment.

It is important to eat well and **maintain** your weight whilst undergoing radiotherapy.

## General tips/advice

- Try to eat small frequent meals and snacks
- Maintain a good fluid intake. It may be helpful to limit hot drinks and include more cold drinks, but avoid alcohol
- Choose foods which you enjoy and find easy to swallow
- Don't worry too much about having foods that are low in fat and sugar for the time being (unless you have another medical condition)
- Some people find that including live yoghurt in the diet can help with diarrhoea. Check with dietician/chemotherapy nurse if you are having chemotherapy
- If you are having pelvic radiotherapy you will be given separate dietary advice if it is needed.

## Sickness

Try to eat small amounts, little and often. Some people find food/drink containing ginger helps with nausea.

## Bladder symptoms

Drink plenty of water based fluids such as cordial, at least 2 litres daily. Tea and coffee can make the symptoms worse.

Some patients will have specific advice regarding how much fluid they drink before their radiotherapy treatment. It is important to follow this advice.

## **Fatigue**

As radiotherapy can damage normal tissues close to or in the treated area, your body will use a great deal of energy to repair these damaged cells. This means that tiredness is a very common side effect of radiotherapy. If you feel fit enough, gentle exercise can help.

Eating nourishing food and drinking plenty of water may also help to provide your body with the nutrients your cells need to repair themselves. Do not force yourself to do things you do not have the energy to do.

## **Sore mouth/ Difficulty swallowing**

Avoid smoking which can prevent your body repairing itself. Avoid drinking alcohol, especially spirits which can irritate your mouth and make it sore. Avoid food which is very hot, spicy, acidic, hard or crunchy. It may be necessary to move to a softer, more liquid diet in some cases.

## **Bowel symptoms**

Please do not modify your diet or take any medication for your bowels without discussing it with a radiographer or consultant.

## Dietary fibre

There are 2 types of dietary fibre and each works in a different way.

### Soluble fibre

Foods containing soluble fibre soften the stools and absorb water as they move through the body. Examples are fruits, vegetables, pulses and oats, which you should be including in your diet.

### Insoluble fibre

Foods containing insoluble fibre increase the speed with which food moves through the body. Examples are wholegrain cereals and wholemeal bread. Avoid these foods whilst you are experiencing diarrhoea.

If you are having problems with excessive wind and bloating, you might find it helpful to cut down on peas, beans, lentils, cabbage and fizzy drinks.

Always make sure you let the radiographers know if you get any side effects. We need you to tell us exactly how you feel not only with regard to side effects, but also your general wellbeing.

If you would like any further advice, please ask the radiographers to arrange for you to speak to a dietician.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Radiotherapy Reception/Transport queries (01772) 522900

Radiotherapy Appointment queries (01772) 522931

## 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.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

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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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.

**Gujarati:**

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

**Romanian:**

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

**Polish:**

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

**Urdu:**

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے بے ل مدد ی ضرورت ہے تو ییچھیا جس ییہ ابی دست ہو یسکت ہے برا ے مہر یان یو ییچھہی۔ معلومات

**Arabic:**

مطبوعة بأحرف كبيرة و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات يُرجى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فير هذه المعلومات

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**Division:** Surgery

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