



Information for
patients and
carers

Hair Loss and Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy to any part of your head or upper neck may cause hair loss. This will only be to the area that has been treated and where the beam goes in and out of your scalp, therefore is often patchy. Your radiographer will be able to point out the areas that hair loss would be expected.

Coping with hair loss

For some people it can be difficult learning to cope with a loss of hair. Wig referrals are available for both male and female radiotherapy patients – discuss this with your doctor. If you have had long hair it can sometimes help to have it cut gradually to help you get used to the change. Scarves and hats can be used to cover any bald patches. It may be worth discussing with your hairdresser how to cleverly style your hair to disguise any thinning patches.

It is very important you do not have your hair cut or shave your head once you have had your radiotherapy planning scan. To do so will affect the mask that has been specially made for you and may result in a delay to your treatment.

Protecting your hair and scalp

During radiotherapy it is important to wash your hair with gentle non perfumed shampoo (baby shampoo) using cool water. Avoid using a hair dryer or any heated styling products. Your hair may become finer at first. Harsh brushing should be avoided and a wide tooth comb is recommended.

If the weather is very hot or very cold try to keep your head protected at all times. The skin on your scalp will be much more sensitive to extreme weather conditions.

The use of an emollient cream is recommended during treatment to help reduce flaking skin and itching.

Once your treatment has finished

It could take 6 to 12 months for your hair to grow back. The higher the dose of radiation received the longer it may take to re-grow. On rare occasions your hair may never grow back fully.

At first it may grow a different colour and if it was straight it may grow back curly. New hair is very fine and needs to be washed gently. Avoid aggressive heat where possible.

If you choose to colour or perm your hair it is best to wait until your scalp is in a healthy condition and any redness and flaking is gone and the new hair is at least 7.5cm long (3 inches).

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

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

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

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

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 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.

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

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھہی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

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

Department: Radiotherapy
Division: Surgery
Production date: October 2010
Review date: May 2023
CA125 V3