



Information for
patients and
carers

Radiotherapy to the Anal Canal

You should have also received the following leaflets:

- Radiotherapy- a general guide for patients and carers
- Planning your radiotherapy treatment
- Radiotherapy treatment
- Skin Care during radiotherapy treatment
- Dietary Advice during radiotherapy treatment

What are the benefits of this treatment?

Radiotherapy has damaging effects on cancer cells. It will also cause some damage to surrounding healthy tissues resulting in some side effects. Radiotherapy (sometimes given with chemotherapy) can reduce the chance of a recurrence of the cancer or can even lead to a cure without the need for surgery.

Are there any alternatives to this treatment?

Surgery is an alternative treatment for some patients. It may also be required following radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Your consultant will have discussed these options with you.

What will happen if you do not have this treatment?

If you choose not to have this treatment, the cancer may continue to grow. Symptoms may develop and worsen. Some cancers may advance and become incurable.

Side effects- early reactions

Sore, red skin (erythema)

It is likely the skin in the treated area will become very red and sore. It is likely to blister and weep. If this happens, you will be given cream to numb and soothe the area. Please follow the advice in our skin care leaflet and from the radiographers.

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.

Bowel symptoms

Treatment may irritate your bowel and you might need to go to the toilet more often. Medication will be prescribed for you if needed.

You may develop tenesmus, which is an urge to open your bowels without passing anything. This can feel like constipation. You may notice an increase in the amount of wind you pass. If opening your bowels becomes painful or you notice some spotting of blood, let us know. These side effects are not uncommon so do not be alarmed. Please **do not** modify your diet or take any medication for your bowels without discussing it with a radiographer or consultant.

Bladder symptoms

You may experience changes in the flow of your urine, a need to pass urine more often, a need to pass urine urgently, a burning sensation on passing urine and/or a small amount of blood in your urine. Your consultant may be able to prescribe you something to help with these symptoms. Drink plenty of water based fluids such as cordial. Tea and coffee can make the symptoms worse. Please tell the radiographers

about any of these symptoms so they can ensure you do not have an infection. **Always** report any difficulty in passing urine to the staff.

Side effects- late reactions

These may include bleeding from the back passage which can require medication or surgery, more urgent and frequent bowel opening and passing urine, impotence, reduced sperm count and/or a lack of semen and infertility. Radiotherapy to the lower abdomen in ladies is likely to induce the menopause in women who are still having regular periods. A reaction called vaginal stenosis may occur as a result of scar tissue forming after radiotherapy. Vaginal dilators can be given to females having their pelvis treated to try to prevent this happening. Please speak to a radiographer for more information about this.

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. We are here to help.

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 ہو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھہ ی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعه بأ حروف كبير ة و بلغات إذا كنت تر يد مساعده في فهم هذه لمعلومات يُر جى أن تطلب أخرى يملكن تو فسير هذه المعلوما ت

Department: Radiotherapy
Division: Surgery
Production date: October 2010
Review date: May 2023
CA129 V3