



Information for
patients and
carers

Radiotherapy to the Abdomen

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 any remaining cancer cells. It will also cause some damage to surrounding healthy tissues resulting in some side effects. The radiotherapy is given to try to kill the cancer cells and reduce the chance of the cancer recurring.

Are there any alternatives to this treatment?

Your oncologist may have advised you about other possible treatments before referring you for radiotherapy. They will be happy to discuss any concerns you may still have.

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

Fatigue

As radiotherapy can damage normal tissues close to or in the treated area your body needs to repair these damaged cells. Tiredness is a common consequence of this. If you feel fit enough, gentle exercise can help. Do not force yourself to do things you do not have the energy to do.

Sore, red skin (erythema)

Radiotherapy can make the skin in the treated area become itchy, red, and sore. You can minimise this by following the advice of the radiographers (and our skin care leaflet).

Bowel symptoms

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

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.

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. To help with these symptoms, drink plenty of water based fluids such as cordial.

Always report any difficulty in passing urine to the staff.

Sickness

The treatment may cause you to feel sick, and possibly to vomit. You may find your food tastes different or you do not feel like eating and drinking. It may be that anti-sickness drugs need to be prescribed for you.

Infertility

The treatment may cause infertility in certain patients. If you have any concerns then let us know and we will arrange for you to discuss them before you begin treatment. It is vitally important that you are not pregnant, and do not become pregnant, whilst you are having radiotherapy.

Side effects- late reactions

Radiotherapy to the lower abdomen in ladies is likely to induce the menopause in women who are still having regular periods. Infertility may also result from a lack of semen or reduced sperm count in males. Radiotherapy may lead to more urgent and frequent bowel opening and passing of water. Bleeding from the back passage may occur which can require medication or surgery. **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 well-being. 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:

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
CA128 V3