



Information for
patients and
carers

Feminine Care during Pelvic Radiotherapy Treatment

This leaflet aims to provide advice to ladies who have had a course of radiotherapy to the pelvic area. The cervix, uterus (womb) or endometrium (lining of the womb) may have been included in the treatment area and therefore been affected by the x-rays. The information in this booklet should not be seen as a replacement for talking with the radiographers, specialist nurses and doctors involved in your treatment and care.

Vaginal changes

You may notice that your vagina becomes drier and it may feel as though it has narrowed and is less flexible. This is probably caused by swelling of vaginal tissue and loss of normal lubricating secretions. It is also possible that the top part of the vagina has been removed during surgery, so it feels shorter.

Minimising vaginal changes

It is important to minimise any further vaginal changes for 2 main reasons:

- Your vagina may need to be examined during future appointments to see how you are recovering from your radiotherapy and to check that there is no cancer present. It is important that you are as comfortable as possible during these examinations and minimising vaginal changes should help achieve this.
- Even if you are not currently sexually active, this may change in the future so minimising vaginal changes is important for this.

How to minimise vaginal changes

There are two methods of keeping vaginal tissue flexible and supple. You can use either method or a combination of the two.

Sexual Intercourse

It is safe for you and your partner to have intercourse when you both feel ready. It is common for either partner to feel worried or anxious at this time so do not be surprised if the physical aspect of your relationship has suffered recently.

Cancer is not contagious and cannot be passed onto your partner. Do not worry if you experience a little discomfort and a slight spotting of blood after intercourse, this is probably caused by the fact your vagina is dry and inflamed. This should settle as the tissues in the vagina are designed to expand. Try using a water soluble lubricant, such as KY jelly, to make intercourse easier.

Vaginal Dilators

These are smooth, plastic tubes which can be inserted into the vagina. These will be provided to suitable patients by the radiographers or specialist nurse along with additional information on how to use them. If you feel you would benefit from vaginal dilators please speak to a member of your treatment team.

If you need any further advice, then please speak to the team. If it is not something we can help with directly we may be able to put you in contact with another professional who can assist you.

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

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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 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 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

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Division: Surgery
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