

**Radiotherapy
To The Pelvis
and Abdomen
Acute Side Effects**

**Patient Information
Leaflet**

Radiotherapy To The Pelvis and Abdomen

The Radiotherapy which you will be receiving to your pelvis and/or abdomen may cause some side effects which your Consultant will have discussed with you.

Possible side effects:

- You may experience a general feeling of **Tiredness**, so we advise you to drink plenty of **water** and avoid drinking large amounts of tea, coffee or alcohol. You should not feel too tired to drive, or carry out normal daily activities.
- You may experience a mild skin reaction which is similar to sunburn and which can be limited by following the skin care advice. You will have been given this advice in a separate leaflet. Wash, bathe and shower as normal and apply a moisturiser three times daily in the treatment area. Minimise friction by wearing loose fitting clothes.
- Later in your treatment you may experience some **looseness of the bowels** or diarrhoea. This is due to the irritation of the bowels by the radiation. This will not occur immediately, and if it does the Review Radiographers will be able to advise you on appropriate changes to your diet. Do not change your diet until advised by a Radiographer.
- Some patients having radiotherapy to the pelvis find that they experience a burning sensation when passing urine, similar to **Cystitis**. If you experience this the Radiographers will advise you accordingly.
- If you are receiving radiotherapy to your abdomen you may also experience some nausea or **sickness**. If this happens then the Radiographers will be able to advise you.
- If you are receiving radiotherapy to your abdomen the radiation can sometimes cause a drop in your blood count, so you may be required to have regular blood tests so that this can be monitored. If your blood count falls too low your doctor may choose to suspend your treatment for a short while to allow the count to return to normal.

If you experience any of the side effects described above or have any other problems please inform the Review Radiographer or one of the Treatment Radiographers.

Stoma Care

The advice of the stoma care nurse is available, please ask.

Gynaecology Advice

A specialist gynaecology nurse and radiographer are available to advise female patients.

After Treatment Care

When you have completed treatment the side effects you may have experienced will continue for several weeks, with the reaction peaking approximately 7-10 days after you finish your course of radiotherapy, so please continue following any of the advice you have been given until the side effects settle.

At the end of your radiotherapy you will be given an appointment for a follow-up consultation with a doctor.

If you have any unexpected side effects or problems after you have finished your treatment then you can contact a radiographer by ringing the radiotherapy department on

01743 261179

Pregnancy And Radiotherapy

All female patients of childbearing age (12-55 years old) will be asked prior to CT scanning and the first treatment of radiotherapy to confirm that they are not pregnant. If you are unsure or think that you may be pregnant then the procedure will not take place until pregnancy has been excluded by a negative pregnancy result. It may seem insensitive to ask, but law requires radiotherapy staff to exclude this possibility before proceeding with any procedure that uses radiation for treatment. These regulations are designed to protect the unborn child as radiotherapy may seriously affect their growth and development.

You will be asked to sign a form to show that this question has been discussed.

It is very important that you are not and do not become pregnant whilst undergoing radiotherapy planning and treatment. If you think you may be pregnant at any time during your course of treatment please tell your clinical oncologist or radiographer immediately.

Further Information

The Oncologist will ask for your consent for any treatment that you require. For more information on informed consent, see http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4005204

This is a time when you may be experiencing all kinds of emotions. The Hamar Help and Support Centre offers support for you and your family or carers. The staff at the Centre provide information, help and specific counselling to suit your individual needs.

Please feel free to discuss any concerns with your Oncologist or Treatment Radiographers. They can also provide you with further information about local and national support groups.

Further information is available from; Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Tel: 0800 783 0057

or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital

01952 282888

HELPFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Ward 23, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

01743 261423

Radiotherapy Treatment

01743 261179

Hamar Help and Support Centre

01743 261035

Macmillan Information & Support Service

01743 261000

ext 1957

ROYAL SHREWSBURY HOSPITAL

Mytton Oak Road

Shrewsbury

Shropshire

SY3 8XQ

Telephone: 01743 261000

Fax: 01743 261006