



The Shrewsbury and  
Telford Hospital  
NHS Trust

## Patient Information

# General Skin-care During Radiotherapy

This is a guide to inform you about looking after your skin during the radiotherapy treatment that you are going to receive. It also explains the possible side effects that you may experience and how they should be managed.

If you have any further questions please contact the **Radiotherapy Department at The Lingen Davies Centre** on **01743 261179**.

Please leave a message on the answerphone with your hospital number and a contact telephone number

Website: [www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)

Information Produced by: Radiotherapy Department

Date of Publication: 01/11/18

Due for Review on: 01/11/21

Issue No 1

© SaTH NHS Trust

## General Skin Care for Radiotherapy

The effect of radiotherapy on the skin can be similar to sunburn i.e. reddening and irritation. Your skin may darken; feel dry, tight or sore. A rash may appear; occasionally the skin may blister or peel.

Some people may be more affected than others, but the effects can be reduced by following a few simple instructions:-

- Gently wash, bathe or shower without a wash cloth or sponge.
- A mild unperfumed soap, shower gel or bodywash may be used to wash the treated area, but rinse thoroughly.
- Then pat dry gently with a soft, clean towel.
- Apply a moisturiser sparingly to the treatment area in the direction of hair growth. Do not remove before treatment
- Expose the area being treated to air whenever possible
- Avoid sticky tape in the area (Elastoplasts or Micropore)
- Minimise friction on skin in the treatment area by wearing loose fitting, soft clothes made of natural fibres (e.g. Cotton)
- Do not irritate the skin by scratching, rubbing vigorously or massaging
- Do not wax the area being treated
- Reduce shaving if possible
- You may use a deodorant, but stop if it irritates your skin or the skin breaks
- Avoid spraying the treated area with products containing alcohol, such as body spray or perfume, aftershave or hair dyes
- If washing your hair in the shower please use a baby shampoo
- Protect the treatment area from exposure to strong sunlight or extremes of temperature (such as ice packs, hot water bottles, or cold winds)

A radiographer will assess your skin reaction daily, and will advise you accordingly

## After Treatment Skin Care

When you have completed your course of radiotherapy treatment the skin reactions you may have experienced will continue for several weeks. The reaction will peak approximately 7-10 days after you finish your course of radiotherapy, so please continue with the above skin care for a month. It is important to protect your skin from the sun and strong winds for at least 12 months after treatment, and this area may always be more sensitive to sunlight. Please use a high factor sun screen on the area that was treated if it is exposed to the sun (sun creams aimed at children are particularly good as they are often high factor and designed for sensitive skin). We recommend the regular use of a moisturising cream in the future to prevent skin dryness. You may swim provided the skin is not broken.

## Pregnancy and Radiotherapy

All female patients of childbearing age (12-55 years old) will be asked prior to CT scanning and maybe before 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 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

radiation 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, the latest Department of Health guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reference-guide-to-consent-for-examination-or-treatment-second-edition>

NHS website has information also:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment/>

This is a time when you may be experiencing all kinds of emotions.

The Hamar Help and Support Centre offer support for you and your family or carers. The staff at the Centre provides 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 also available from;

Patient Advice 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

**We are a Dementia Friendly Department, please contact us directly on our answerphone 01743 261179 if you require additional help**



Proud To **Care**



Make It **Happen**



We Value **Respect**



Together We **Achieve**