

Information for Patients

Palliative Radiotherapy



General Advice

The effect of radiotherapy on the skin can be similar to sunburn i.e. reddening and irritation. Some people may be more affected than others, but the effects can be reduced by following a few simple instructions:-

- Wash and bathe as normal.
- Then pat dry gently with a soft, clean towel.
- Apply moisturiser to the treatment area three times a day, from the start of your treatment.
- Do not irritate the skin by scratching, rubbing vigorously or massaging.
- Protect the treatment area from exposure to strong sunlight or extremes of temperature.

Treatment Day

Most of the time in the treatment room is taken to position you correctly, once the radiographers are satisfied that your treatment has been accurately set they will leave the room to switch the machine on. It is important to keep as still as possible during the treatment process but continue to breathe normally. If you found it difficult to keep still during your planning CT please make someone aware before your first treatment.

On your first day an X-ray will be taken to check you are in the correct position. There will be a short delay whilst the Radiographers check this and then begin treatment. When the machine is switched on you will not feel anything from the treatment, you may hear the machine buzz as it delivers a portion of the dose. The treatment dose is sometimes delivered from a number of positions, the machine delivers each portion then automatically moves around to the next position. Once the machine has successfully delivered the treatment the radiographer will come back in to treatment room. Do not

attempt to move until the radiographer tells you that it is safe to do so.

Keep Radiographers informed of any problems such as increase in pain, or new concerns that arise during treatment.

After Treatment Care

If you are experiencing pain in the area to be treated, it is important that you are aware that this may increase both during and after the course of treatment. Your current pain medication may need to be adjusted. 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 shortly after you finish your course of radiotherapy, so please continue with the above skin care for as long as you feel necessary. 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. Please follow any specific instructions your Consultant has given you regarding mobilisation, pain control and general care. Your Consultant will arrange to see you again within 3 months of your treatment to discuss how you are feeling.

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

Further information is available from:



Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback which can be shared in a number of ways through the hospital website. Scan the QR code to give feedback. <https://www.sath.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/feedback/>

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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, Tel: 01952 282888

Other Sources of Information

NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

111 (free from a landline or mobile)

www.nhs.uk

Self Help & Support Groups

A selection of websites providing access to good quality health information, local organisations and community groups is available from the library. www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/

Information in Other Languages or Formats

If you require this information in a different way such as easy read, a different language, larger print, audio or braille please tell a member of staff or contact the Patient Experience Team;

sath.patientexperience@nhs.net or 01743 261000 ext. 2503.

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

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