

Information for Patients

Prostate Radiotherapy Completion



You have now completed a course of radiotherapy to your prostate and this leaflet will explain what happens now. You will receive a follow up appointment in approximately 6 - 8 weeks time. This appointment will come via a letter through the post. One week prior to this appointment please go to your local GP surgery to have a PSA blood test.

How often will I be seen now the radiotherapy has finished?

Your first appointment will be 6-8 weeks after the end of your radiotherapy. At this appointment we will check that any side-effects you have are settling and we can answer any questions that you may have. We will also check your PSA result at this appointment and then again 3 months later. You will be seen routinely every 6 months.

What happens at the follow up appointment?

We will want to know how the radiotherapy has affected you. We will ask about urinary and bowel symptoms that you may have as well as any sexual or erection problems that the treatment may have caused. You may require a digital rectal examination (DRE) to assess how the cancer has responded to the treatment.

When will the side-effects settle?

It can take several weeks for the side-effects to get better. In most patients they will be a lot better 4-6 weeks after the radiotherapy has finished. They should have completely settled by 2-3 months after radiotherapy completion.

What is a PSA blood test?

PSA stands for prostate specific antigen and is a normal protein found in the blood of all men. PSA is often raised in men with prostate cancer. We will monitor these levels in your blood and this will tell us how well you have responded to treatment.

When should I have my PSA taken?

You should have the blood test 1 week before each clinic appointment. This allows time for it to be processed. This can be taken at your local GP practice or local hospital.

How will I know how well the treatment has worked?

PSA blood tests have been found to be more effective than a physical examination or scans to tell us how well you have responded to treatment. If these remain stable then it is a good sign that your prostate cancer is under control. We will monitor your PSA blood tests for at least 5 years and inform you of the results at each clinic appointment.

Will I have further scans?

We do not routinely do any further scans or biopsies after the radiotherapy has finished as the best way of monitoring your disease is by monitoring your PSA with a blood test.

What are the Long-term side – effects?

These side effects may occur months or years after completing a course of radiotherapy. Less than 5- 10% of patients will experience serious late damage.

Effects to be aware of are:

- Dryness and darkening of the skin in the treated area: this can be minimised by regularly using a moisturiser
- In a small number of cases there may be prolongation in the difficulty in passing urine, dribbling or inability to hold urine. There may also be narrowing of the urethra which may need to be treated surgically.
- Chronic proctitis may occur, bowel adhesions (particularly if pelvic surgery was performed before radiotherapy), persistent looseness of the bowel, abdominal pain, passing of blood with the stool, chronic discomfort when opening the bowels and blockage of the bowels
- Erectile dysfunction: the risk of this can be as high as 40-50%.
- There is a very small risk of developing a fistula (small hole) between the rectum and bladder. The risk of this occurring as a result of radiotherapy alone is very low.

How long will I have to continue hormone treatment?

This will depend on the stage of your prostate cancer, for early stage this is not continued after the radiotherapy is completed however, for more advanced disease this may be continued for 2-3 years.

When will the side-effects of hormone treatment settle?

Men generally notice that hot flushes settling and erections returning 3-4 months after the last injection.

Erection and Libido

Hormone therapy can affect your ability to have erections and can affect your libido. This should return to normal after the hormone treatment is stopped however, the longer you have been on hormones the longer it may take and the less likely it is to return. You may notice a reduced amount of fluid in your ejaculation; this is normal and permanent after radiotherapy.

Fertility

Radiotherapy treatment may have made you infertile; however, you should continue to use contraception.

Useful Contacts



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 0800 783 0057 01743 261691
Princess Royal Hospital 01952 282888



Radiotherapy Treatment Enquiries
01743 261179



Oncology Secretaries
01743 261656



Hamar Help and Support Centre
01743 261035 Ward 23, RSH 01743 261423



Macmillan Information & Support Service
01743 261000 ext 1957



The Prostate Cancer Charity 0845 300 8383 E-mail:
info@prostate-cancer.org.uk Website:
www.prostate-cancer.org.uk

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

Information Produced by: Radiotherapy Department

Date of Publication: 01/11/18 Version number: 1

Due for Review on: 01/11/21 ID:

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