

Radiotherapy to the pelvis (Male)

Your treatment appointments

You will need to arrive 40-60 minutes before your appointment time to complete your bowel and/or bladder preparation.

- A radiographer will collect you from the main oncology waiting area (A12) and explain the treatment to you and discuss possible side effects with you.
- **You will have the opportunity to ask questions at this point.**
- You will be shown to the changing room and asked to remove your shoes and belt and any loose items in your pockets.
- You will then be taken into the treatment room.
- The radiographers will position you on the treatment couch. The room lights will be dimmed and a light and green laser lights will be shone on your skin to line up the treatment area with the machine.
- The radiographers will leave the room to begin the treatment.
- **Should you need assistance they will be watching you on TV screens throughout your treatment.**
- Treatment to the pelvis is given from two or more different angles or via an arc of treatment these are checked daily prior to treatment and x-rays are taken to confirm your treatment position.

- When the machine is on it makes a buzzing sound, but the treatment is painless.

Additional information about prostate radiotherapy

- After you have finished your treatment, you will be required to have a PSA blood test at your GP surgery. (about 2 weeks before your follow up appointment)

Short term side effects

Most side effects are temporary and do not happen to all patients. They generally develop during the second week of a course of treatment and continue up to four to six weeks after your treatment has finished.

- **Tiredness**
- **Sore skin** in the treatment area
- **Loose bowels.**
- **Irritated bladder** causing you to pass urine more frequently. This can be accompanied by a burning sensation; this should be reported to the radiographers.
- **Haemorrhoids (piles).** If you have a previous history of piles the radiotherapy can aggravate them. Please ask the radiographers before applying any creams or ointments.

Long term side effects

Long term side effects may occur months or years after treatment has finished. Your doctor will discuss these with you before you start.

- **Reduced bladder capacity;** you may have to pass urine slightly more frequently in the long term, although radiotherapy doesn't make you incontinent.

- **Proctitis;** this is inflammation of the lining of the rectum. Usually it is only a short-term effect, but occasionally people suffer from a sensitive rectum later on and might have future episodes of bleeding or diarrhoea. If you do get bleeding later it is important to let your doctor know as it may need investigation.
- **Impotence;** Radiotherapy can affect the ability to gain and sustain an erection. There are drugs available that can help with this.
- **Fertility;** Radiotherapy can also affect your fertility.

Looking after yourself during and after your Radiotherapy

- ✓ **Do** continue washing/bathing as normal.
- ✓ **Do** be gentle with your skin, pat dry.
- ✓ **Do** avoid extremes of temperature such as heating and cooling pads.
- ✓ **Do** increase your fluid intake – ideally two litres of water a day, minimise alcohol consumption.
- ✓ **Do** feel free to discuss any worries with the radiographers.
- ✓ **Do** wear loose fitting cotton underwear.
- ✓ **Do** advise the radiographers of any changes to your bowel habits.
- ✓ **Do** read 'Managing your side effects – Bowels' leaflet.
- ✓ **Do** read our 'Managing your Radiotherapy skin reaction' leaflet

Smoking can make your skin reaction worse – if you need help to stop please ask for advice.

What happens after your course of radiotherapy?

After your course of Radiotherapy finishes you will receive a follow up appointment with urology (approximately 6 weeks after)

A radiographer will give you an information leaflet about what you need to do upon completion of your course of radiotherapy.

Radiotherapy department contact details

Telephone: 01225 824853

Monday-Friday 8am-3:30pm

Website: www.ruh.nhs.uk/patients/services/radiotherapy

Other useful phone numbers/websites

Bath RUH cancer information centre: (01225) 82 4049

Macmillan: www.macmillan.org.uk
08088 080000

Helen Hazell (01225) 82 4250/4034

Life after cancer PocketMedic® have produced some patient information videos, available at www.medic.video/swe15-cancer (Life after cancer)

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
01225 428331 www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.