

Radiotherapy to the chest

Your treatment appointments

- A radiographer will collect you from the main oncology waiting area (A12), 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 top clothes and put a hospital gown on. You will then be taken into the treatment room.
- The radiographers will position you on the treatment couch. The room lights will be dimmed, 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 the radiographers will be watching you on TV screens throughout your treatment.**
- Treatment to the chest is given from two or more different angles, these are checked daily prior to treatment. When the machine is on it makes a buzzing sound, but the treatment is painless.
- X-ray images are also taken before treatment is given to confirm your position is correct.

Short term side effects

Most side effects are temporary and do not happen to all patients. They generally develop during the second half of a course of treatment and continue up to four to 6 weeks after a course has finished.

- Tiredness
- **Sore skin** in the treatment area
- Breathlessness
- Cough
- **Difficulty swallowing.** As it is important to maintain a healthy balanced diet during your treatment inform the radiographers of any difficulty.



Long term side effects

Long term side effects may occur months or years after treatment has finished. Your doctor or a radiographer will discuss these with you before you start. **Lung fibrosis.** The formation of scar tissue may result in a permanent alteration in breathing and a cough.

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** keep the treatment area out of direct sunlight.
- **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** 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.

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

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.