

# Radiotherapy to the Oesophagus &/or Stomach

## 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 can be delivered from one, 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.
- On your first day x-ray images are also taken which can make the procedure slightly longer. If you are having a long course of radiotherapy these images are repeated regularly throughout your treatment.

## 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 six weeks after a course has finished.

- **Tiredness**
- **Sore skin** in the treatment area.

- **Nausea/sickness** if the stomach is being treated, regular anti-sickness drugs will be prescribed to prevent this.
- **Soreness when swallowing** this may require you to alter your diet and/or take painkillers temporarily.
- **Worsening in difficulty swallowing** this may require you to alter your diet to softer food or liquids temporarily.

### 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](http://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](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)  
08088 080000

**Life after cancer** PocketMedic® have produced some patient information videos, available at [www.medic.video/swe15-cancer](http://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](http://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](mailto:ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net) or telephone 01225 825656.