

Managing your side effects of Radiotherapy – Bowels

Managing your radiotherapy side effects - Bowels

Drink plenty of fluids to replace the water you lose when having diarrhoea.

Eat small meals and snacks rather than 3 large meals a day (see below).

Take care of your rectal area, use un-perfumed baby wipes instead of toilet paper.

Use loperamide as directed by your oncologist.

Let the radiographers know if you have diarrhoea more than 4 times in one day despite using regular loperamide.

Foods that may make your stools firmer if you have diarrhoea

- White Bread, rice and pasta.
- Dairy products.
- Meat or fish.
- Peel fruit and vegetables to reduce the fibre.

Vegetarians should replace pulses with dairy products and tofu.

Foods that stimulate the bowel and make the stool softer if you have constipation

- Apricots, baked beans, berries (except blueberries), broccoli, cabbage, chickpeas, garlic, grapes, kidney beans, onions, peaches, peas, peppers, plums, prunes, spinach, sprouts and sweetcorn.
- Linseed, nuts, and popcorn.
- Alcohol and any fruit juices.
- Chocolate.

Avoid high-fat and greasy food, spicy food, sugar free foods containing sorbitol, mannitol or xylitol, and caffeine drinks such as coffee, tea, cola and energy drinks.

Foods that may cause wind

- Baked beans, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, chickpeas, cooked dried beans, cucumber, dairy products, kidney beans, lentils, onions, radishes, spinach, soy products, sprouts, sweetcorn.
- Fizzy drinks and beer.
- Sugar-free food, gum and sweets, which contain sorbitol.

THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE TO FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE PROBLEMS TO THE BOWELS DURING RADIOTHERAPY AND SHOULD ONLY BE FOLLOWED TEMPORARILY.

REFERENCES Macmillan Cancer Support. 2012. *Managing the late effects of pelvic radiotherapy in men.*

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.