

Information for patients receiving

Radiotherapy treatment to your breast buds



This leaflet is for patients with prostate cancer who will have radiotherapy to their breast buds (nipple area). It is used to prevent enlargement of the male breast tissue (gynaecomastia) and breast pain (mastalgia) in patients with prostate cancer who are being treated with hormone therapy.

It describes the radiotherapy planning and treatment and the effects that you may experience during and after treatment, and how best to cope with them.

The effects of treatment vary from one patient to another. Therefore the information given here is intended as a general guide and does not mean you will have all the effects described. Your doctor, nurse specialist or radiographer will explain your treatment to you.

If you are in any doubt about anything or have any questions or problems, please let us know as soon as possible.

Treatment Planning

Before your radiotherapy begins, the treatment must be planned by your doctor and radiographer.

We will ask you to undress to the waist ensuring your dignity is maintained whenever possible. We will ask you to lie flat on your back. Your doctor will use a plastic template and a pen to mark the area around your nipple. Your radiographers will use these pen marks each day you come for treatment. It is helpful if you can keep the marks on until your treatment has finished. We will put some clear stickers over them so they don't wash off. You can still bathe or shower while wearing these stickers. Your radiographer will also take photographs and measurements of the treatment area in case the marks come off.

You will start your treatment a few days after this appointment.

Treatment

You will have your treatment on a Linear Accelerator. The staff operating these machines are therapy radiographers. They will explain everything to you before treatment starts.



Linear Accelerator

You will lie on the treatment couch in the same position you were in when you were planned. The machine comes close to you but does not touch you. When your radiographers have everything positioned correctly, they will leave the room and switch the machine on. They watch you carefully from outside the room on close circuit TV. The treatment is painless and takes only 5-10 minutes. You will feel no different afterwards.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Effects of Treatment

Skin: Your skin in the treatment area may become sensitive and pink soon after completing your treatment. You may bath or shower during treatment as normal, but don't have the water too hot (lukewarm). You may use your own soap during treatment unless it begins to cause you discomfort.

Remember, radiotherapy only affects the area of your body being treated.

General Advice

Drink plenty of fluids as it is important you don't become dehydrated.

Avoid exposing the treatment area to sunshine during treatment.

Thereafter use a total sun block on the area for a year after treatment.

After Treatment Ends

Any symptoms that have developed because of the treatment will gradually settle down. Remember, the full benefits of your treatment may take a number of weeks to be felt, and it may be a little while before you notice any improvement.

Your doctor will arrange to see you about 6-8 weeks after your treatment has finished.

Where can I get help?

Many people already have had a lot of information and support with their own prostate cancer or Macmillan Nurse Specialist at another hospital or in the community. Remember that they can also help you with any worries or concerns at this time, and because you know them already, they can provide invaluable help and support during and after your treatment. So please remember to give them a call if you need to.

Information & Support

All our staff are here to make sure your treatment goes as smoothly as possible and will try to help with any questions or problems you may have. Further specialist help and information in the Beatson is available from:

Information and Support Radiographer

Tel: 0141 301 7427

Information Radiographer and Counsellor

Tel: 0141 301 7423

Information Centre (Level 1 within the Beatson)

Tel: 0141 301 7390

The Beatson Cancer Centre has a Radiotherapy Advice Line available for patients who have completed treatment. This is an answer phone service, available Monday – Friday. Please leave your name, date of birth and telephone number and a radiographer will call you back as soon as possible.

Tel: 0141 301 7432

The Cancer Centre also has a Cancer Treatment Helpline for urgent calls. This is for patients on or within 6 weeks of treatment who have urgent or severe symptoms such as -

- Shivering or flu-like symptoms.
- Temperature greater than 37.5°C.
- Gum/nose bleeds or unusual bruising.
- Worsening or sudden breathlessness.
- Leg weakness/difficulty walking.
- Severe nausea/vomiting/diarrhoea/constipation.
- Sudden increases or uncontrolled pain.
- Other concerning symptoms associated with your cancer treatment.

The line is available 24 hours for emergencies, although it would be helpful if you called early in the day if this is at all possible.

For Urgent Calls:

Beatson 8.00am – 8.00pm Tel: 0141 301 7990

National 8.00pm – 8.00am Tel: 0800 917 7711

Counselling & Clinical Psychology

This leaflet deals with the physical aspects of your treatment, but your emotional well-being is just as important to us. Being diagnosed with cancer can be a distressing time for you and those closest to you. Within the department, we have a counselling and clinical psychology service that may be able to help with worries and difficulties you might be having before during or after treatment. If you think this may be helpful to you, please ask staff to put you in touch.

There are also voluntary organisations providing information and support. These include:

- **Macmillan Cancer Support**
0808 808 0000 (Monday to Friday, 9.00 am – 8.00pm)
www.macmillan.org.uk Provides practical, medical, emotional and financial advice for those affected by cancer.
- **Prostate Cancer UK Helpline** 0800 074 8383
There are support groups throughout the country. Please check the website to find your local group.
www.prostatecanceruk.org
- **Maggie's Gartnavel:** 0141 357 2269
- **Maggie's Lanarkshire, Monklands Hospital:** 01236 771199
- **Maggie's Forth Valley:** 01324 868069
Maggie's Centre provides a comprehensive cancer support programme for people and their families affected by cancer.

- **Cancer Support Scotland (Tak Tent), The Calman Centre, Gartnavel Complex**

Freephone 0800 652 4531 or 0141 337 8199

Provides emotional and practical support on a one-to-one basis and through community based groups. Complementary therapies available.

www.cancersupportscotland.org

- **Macmillan Benefits Team** (within the Beatson)

0141 301 7374

Provides free and confidential advice for people affected by cancer and their carers.

- **Beatson Cancer Centre** – if you want to find out more about our Centre please visit **www.beatson.scot.nhs.uk**
- **NHS 24 111**

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