

Radiotherapy for Plantar (Ledderhose's) and Palmar (Dupuytren's disease) Fibromatosis



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This leaflet is for patients receiving radiotherapy for plantar (Ledderhose's) or palmar (Dupuytren's disease) fibromatosis. It describes your radiotherapy planning and treatment. It also explains the effects that you may experience during and after treatment, and how best to cope with them. Your doctor and radiographer will explain specific aspects of your treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask.

What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy is the use of carefully measured doses of radiation to treat a variety of conditions. It is mostly used to treat cancer. It can however also be used in the treatment of benign (non-cancerous) conditions, such as plantar and palmar fibromatosis. It has an anti-inflammatory effect which can help to reduce the symptoms caused by your condition.

How many treatments will I need?

You will have your treatment in 2 parts:

Part 1: 5 treatments over 5 consecutive days (not at the weekend)



10-12 week break



Part 2: 5 treatments over 5 consecutive days (not at the weekend)

Treatment preparation

Radiotherapy treatment is a very accurate treatment. We will plan it individually for you. You will visit the radiotherapy department several times before you start your treatment. The following steps are needed:

Step 1: Mould room visit

- In order to ensure accuracy and reproducibility we will need to make a special plastic mould of the area we want to treat. It will be made for you in the mould room.
- The mould is used to keep your hand or foot in the same position for each treatment.
- Reference marks are put on the mould to ensure your treatment is delivered to the correct area each day.
- It is used for your scan and each day you come for treatment.
- You will have two visits to the mould room to ensure you are correctly positioned.

Picture 1 & 2: Mould and treatment position (Palmar)



Picture 3 & 4: Mould and treatment position (Plantar)



Step 2: Planning your radiotherapy treatment

Following your visit to the mould room, the planning of your treatment will begin with a visit to the CT simulator (scanner). This is a special x-ray machine used to take images with you lying in the position you will be in when you are having your treatment. The scan usually takes 10-15 minutes.



Picture 5: CT Simulator

Your doctor may also ask for you to have an MRI scan of your hands or feet.

The information from your scan is used by your doctor to plan your radiotherapy.

Radiotherapy treatment

You will have your treatment on a linear accelerator. This is a special type of x-ray machine. The staff who operate these machines are called therapy radiographers.



Picture 6: Linear accelerator

Your radiographers will explain everything to you before treatment starts and check that you know what to expect.

- You will lie on the treatment couch, just as you were in the CT simulator.
- Your radiographers will dim the lights in the room while they position you for your treatment.
- Your radiographers may place a sheet of wax over the area to be treated.
- They will leave the room while the machine is switched on, but are watching you the whole time on closed circuit TV.
- The machine will move around you, but it won't touch you.
- The treatment is painless and you should feel no different afterwards.
- The whole process only takes about 10 minutes.
- If you have any questions or are unsure about anything to do with your treatment, please speak to your radiographers.

What are the side effects of treatment?

Radiotherapy affects the skin in the area being treated. You may notice your skin becoming slightly pink or red. It may also be dry/flaky, itchy and a little sore. This will gradually get better once treatment finishes.

You should wash your skin with lukewarm water and your normal soap. Pat your skin dry with a soft towel. You should continue with these instructions until any skin reaction has settled.

If you are having your hands treated, it may be advisable to wear rubber gloves when carrying out household cleaning tasks.

In the long term, the area of skin treated may become a little discoloured, i.e. darker or lighter than before.

You may feel pressure and/or pain in the treated area. If you had your feet treated, this may be worse when walking.

Radiotherapy can delay the healing process. If you have surgery to the treated area within a short time of radiotherapy, it may take longer than usual for your scar to heal.

A very rare but potential effect is that radiation can increase the risk of developing cancers in the treated area. Although this is a serious possible risk of your radiotherapy, it is important to bear in mind that the effect is very rare. If it does happen it is likely to be years after treatment.

What happens when my radiotherapy treatment has finished?

You will get follow up appointments at the hospital where you were initially seen by your radiotherapy doctor. They will be around 3, 6, 12 and 24 months after finishing your radiotherapy.

Where can I get help?

The Beatson Cancer Centre has a **Radiotherapy Advice Line**. This is for patients who have questions about their radiotherapy treatment. It is an answer phone service, available Monday – Friday. Please leave your name and telephone number and a radiographer will call you back as soon as possible. **Tel: 0141 301 7432**

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