

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.
- The effects that you may experience during and after treatment.
- How best to cope with these effects.
- Who to contact if you have any questions or concerns.

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.

Your radiographers will ask you to undress to the waist and lie on your back. We will ensure your dignity is maintained whenever possible. 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 therefore 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 just 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 machine called a Linear Accelerator. The staff operating these machines are called therapy radiographers. They will explain everything to you before treatment starts.



Linear Accelerator

Your radiographers will show you into the treatment room. They will ask you to take your top things off and lie on the treatment couch. 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 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, pink or itchy soon after completing your treatment. You may bath or shower as normal during treatment, but don't have the water too hot (lukewarm). You may use your own soap during treatment unless it begins to cause you discomfort.

Avoid exposing the treatment area to sunshine during treatment. You will need to be especially careful for the first year after your treatment has finished as this area will always be much more sensitive to the sun. We advise you use sunscreen with both UVA/UVB protection and minimum SPF 50.

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

## **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.

## **Where can I get help?**

Many people have already had a lot of information and support from 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](http://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](http://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, The Calman Centre, Gartnavel Complex**  
Freephone **0800 652 4531**  
Provides emotional and practical support on a one-to-one basis and through community based groups. Complementary therapies available.  
**[www.cancersupportscotland.org](http://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](http://www.beatson.scot.nhs.uk)**
- **NHS 24 111**

Reviewed by H. Reid May 2021  
Approved by H. Reid May 2021

Review date: May 2023