

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



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

Your first appointment will involve a visit to our planning department. You will meet our radiographers and your doctor. They will use a felt tip pen to carefully mark the area to be treated on your skin. Some measurements are taken and with your permission, some photographs as well. Sometimes, they might put some clear stickers over the pen marks to help keep

them in place until you start your treatment. This helps your radiographers to treat the exact area when you return for your treatment. Your treatment will start a few days after this appointment.

You may have to have this mark-up procedure repeated again before you start part 2 of your treatment.

Occasionally, a CT scan may be requested by your doctor to help with planning your treatment. This would be done in The Beatson.

Radiotherapy treatment

There are different ways to treat plantar and palmar fibromatosis using radiotherapy. Your doctor will decide which is best and discuss this with you.

The most common treatment involves the use of superficial radiation. This means that the radiation does not travel far into your skin before it is absorbed. These treatments are explained below.

Type 1-Superficial low dose X-rays

If you are having your treatment on the superficial X-ray unit, it will be on your appointment list as 'Superficial'. It is quite a small machine with an applicator attached. It comes in contact with your skin in the area to be treated. It lightly touches you and isn't painful.

When your radiographers are happy with everything, they will leave the treatment room to switch the machine on. They are watching you all the time on CCTV cameras. You won't see or feel anything. It is very important that you keep still during your treatment.

Your appointment on this machine can last up to 20 minutes. Most of this time is getting you into the correct position. The actual treatment itself lasts about 5-10 minutes.



Picture 1: Superficial X-ray unit

Type 2- Electrons

If you are having your treatment using electrons, it will be on your appointment list as one of our treatment rooms. The type of machine used for electron treatments is a linear accelerator. It is quite a large machine with an applicator attached to the end. The machine will not touch you, but will come quite close. Your radiographers may also put a piece of wax over the treatment area (hand or foot).

When your radiographers are happy with everything, they will leave the treatment room to switch the machine on. They are watching you all the time on CCTV cameras. You won't see or feel anything. It is very important that you keep still during your treatment.

Your appointment on this machine lasts about 10 minutes. Most of this time is getting you into the correct position. The actual treatment itself lasts a couple of minutes.



Picture 2: Linear accelerator

On some occasions, your doctor may want to use a different type of radiation to those mentioned above. This would treat deeper into your hand or foot and is therefore only required if you have deeper and/or diffuse nodules. This would require a visit to our mould room department to have a special plastic mould made. This helps to keep your hand or foot in the same position each day. You would also have to have a CT scan to help plan your treatment. Your doctor will discuss this with you.

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 receive regular follow up appointments at the hospital where you were initially seen by your radiotherapy doctor. This will be explained to you.

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. ☎ **0141 301 7432**

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