This leaflet aims to provide information for patients receiving a course of radiation therapy to the prostate or bladder area. Your doctor may have already talked to you about this treatment but please ask if anything is still worrying you, however small you think it is. Each course of treatment is tailored to the individual, so your treatment plan may not be the same as somebody else’s.

Daily Procedure:

- The radiation therapists will position you on the treatment couch using the tattoos on your skin. It is important to be as relaxed as possible and try not to help them if they are moving you.
- Once you are correctly positioned try not to move. You can breathe normally.
- During treatment the radiation therapists will leave the room. They will watch you on monitors so if you have any problems just raise your hand. There is also an intercom system which allows you to speak to them should you need to.
- You will not see or feel anything, but you will hear the machine switch on. The machine will move around you but will not touch you.
- It is important that you do not move until a radiation therapist has told you that your treatment has finished.

Smoking - try to avoid smoking if possible. There is a smoking cessation officer available in the hospital to give you advice and support to help you quit smoking. It can be difficult to get through a long course of treatment without feeling low at some point. It is quite normal to feel up and down during radiation therapy and for several weeks afterwards. Please let us know when things get tough and we will do our best to help you.

Radiation therapy is a cumulative treatment. Any reactions that you have had may persist for several weeks after you finish your treatment. These reactions are usually most severe in the 1-2 weeks following treatment. You should continue to follow any advice given until these side effects have subsided.

On your final day of treatment you will be given an appointment to see the doctor in approximately 6-8 weeks. At this appointment the doctor will discuss your progress.

We are here to help. If you would like more information on any aspect of your treatment, or you are troubled by anything, please speak to us.

After Treatment:

Radiation Therapy to the Prostate or Bladder Area

Information For Patients Receiving Radiation Therapy to the Prostate or Bladder Area

Contact Telephone Numbers:

Radiation Therapy Reception: 021-4922492
LA 1: 021-4922479
LA 2: 021-4922478
LA 3: 021-4921307
LA 4: 021-4921308

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Dietary Advice:

A normal diet with a variety of foods will help to give you energy and strength. We recommend that you continue on your current diet until you experience any side effects.

If you do experience diarrhoea as a result of your treatment, try making these changes to your diet in the short term:

- Reduce the amount of fibre in your diet. Cut down on wholemeal, whole-wheat or granary bread, bran, fibre-rich and whole grain cereals, raw vegetables, green leafy vegetables (cabbage, spinach, sprouts), fresh fruit (especially berry fruits, grapes, plums and pears), dried fruits, nuts, peas, beans and lentils.
- Avoid greasy, rich or highly spiced food.
- Eat plenty of white bread, lean meat, white fish, cheese, eggs, pasta, potatoes and other root vegetables (carrots), rice, milk puddings and tinned fruit (such as peaches or pears).
- Avoid using any other products on the skin, unless recommended by radiation therapy staff. Some products may irritate the skin, so please ask us before using anything.
- Do not rub or scratch the area, as this will make the reaction worse.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing next to the skin, preferably natural fibres such as cotton.
- Do not expose skin to hot water bottles, ice packs etc.
- Pat the skin dry with a soft towel. Do not rub it.
- We recommend and advise patients to drink at least one glass of cranberry juice daily.
- Increase your fluid intake will increase clearance through the bladder and reduce the severity of these side effects.
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Fatigue

Fatigue is another commonly experienced side effect of radiation therapy. It ranges from a mild loss of energy to an overwhelming “bone tired” feeling that is not always relieved by rest. You may feel that you feel more tired as the treatment progresses. These are some ideas that may help:

- Rest as much as you feel that you need to.
- Gentle exercise such as walking 2-3 times a week can help reduce fatigue.
- Do the things that you enjoy and that make you feel good such as reading, visiting with friends or spending time outdoors.
- While many people find they are able to carry on working, others may need time off.

You can continue to drive a car if you wish. Many patients are able to drive themselves throughout their treatment. It may take a while after your treatment finishes before any tiredness you may have been experiencing gradually disappears.

Bladder Irritation

Bladder irritation may occur. Radiation therapy can irritate the lining of the bladder and may result in some of the following symptoms:

- Frequency (the need to pass urine more often than usual)
- Urgency (the need to pass urine suddenly, with little warning)
- Pain on passing urine
- Difficulty in passing urine
- Blood in the urine

This problem is usually temporary and resolves soon after treatment has finished.

It is IMPORTANT to inform the radiation therapists if you are experiencing any of the above of any symptoms, as you may have an infection.

Hair Loss

Hair loss only occurs in the area that is being treated. You may therefore lose some of your pubic hair. Once the radiation therapy is complete the hair usually grows back. This can take between six and twelve months. In some cases however, re-growth may not be complete.

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