
Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy may be used as a sole treatment or alongside other treatments like chemotherapy or surgery. Radiotherapy may also be used to control the symptoms of cancers which are not responding to treatment.

There are two main kinds of radiotherapy treatment:

- External treatment: a beam of radiation is aimed at the part of your body where the cancer is found
- Internal treatment, also called brachytherapy: a low dose source of radioactive material is placed in your body

Radiotherapy may damage normal cells as well as cancer cells, however these will usually repair themselves over time. The treatment can, however, be very dangerous to unborn children. You should always tell the team treating you if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.

Most radiotherapy takes place on an outpatient basis, so you probably won't need to be admitted to hospital for treatment.

We plan and tailor your treatment carefully before starting the course of radiotherapy.

- You will have a CT scan, so that we can target the therapy as precisely as possible
- We may need to make some permanent marks on your skin, these will be small tattoos and will act as reference points for your treatment.
- You may need a mask, or shell, to help you keep still during the treatment. If this is the case, this will be made as part of your CT planning scan appointment.
- We will also take a digital photograph of you to store on your patient record. This is only so that we can confirm your identity before treatment and will not be used for any other purpose.

The planning of your treatment may take several days and there is usually a delay between planning appointments and your first treatment appointment.

Some tumours respond to a combination of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Your consultant will decide what is best for you and we will work out your treatment plan accordingly. You may need to complete the chemotherapy before your radiotherapy begins, complete the

radiotherapy and then start the chemo, or have the two treatments simultaneously. In the last case, we will coordinate your appointments to ensure that you only need one visit for both treatments.

During your treatment you will see your doctors and / or specialist radiographers on a regular basis. This is so that we can see how you are getting on, sort out any problems that may develop and discuss any worries or concerns that you may have.