



Radiotherapy Information Sheet

1. What is Radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy is one of the common ways to treat cancers. Radiotherapy involves the use of ionizing radiation to destroy tumour while trying to preserve normal tissue as far as possible. Normal cells of the area will be irradiated and affected during the procedure, but they generally recover faster than tumour cells.

2. Will I feel any pain during the radiotherapy? What is procedure like?

You will experience no pain during the radiotherapy session, similar to an X-ray scan. Before each treatment session, radiation therapists will verify the treatment position for you. You will then stay in the treatment room alone for 5 to 30 minutes while the radiotherapy is being delivered. You can speak to us through the intercom if necessary and the radiotherapists will closely monitor your condition through the CCTV.

3. Will the radiation stay in my body and affect my family?

Radiation emitted by the radiotherapy machines will cause biological effect when it reaches the body then destroy the cancer cells. The radiation will dissipate as the machine stops. Only the person who receives the treatment will be affected by the radiation.

4. What are the common side effects of radiotherapy?

Side effects of radiotherapy are usually mild and short-term, and which could be improved in weeks. Our medical staff will provide you appropriate assistance throughout the treatment course. Some common side effects of radiotherapy are listed below,

General side effects

- Skin reaction of irradiated area, such as redness, pigmentation and dryness of skin
- Loss of hair in irradiated area
- Fatigue

Side effects specific to the irradiated site

- Brain
Headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and somnolence
- Head and Neck
Dry mouth, change of taste, inflammation of oral or throat mucosa causing pain, difficulty in swallowing
- Lung
Cough, chest pain, nausea, radiation-induced lung inflammation (uncommon)
If esophagus is included in the radiation field, it might cause pain, difficulty in swallowing, poor appetite and nausea
- Abdomen
Nausea and vomiting, poor appetite, abdominal discomfort/pain, diarrhea
- Pelvis
Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, frequent loose stool, frequent urination, sensation of incomplete bowel emptying
- Bone
Short term pain flare. Other side effects could occur dependent on sites of irradiation
- Skin
Skin redness, swelling, inflammation, dryness and hair loss

Patient's Label

Patient Name: _____

Hospital No: _____

Episode No: _____



5. Any points for attention during radiotherapy?

- Radiotherapy can cause teratogenicity. Therefore, both male and female patients should take contraceptive measures during radiotherapy
- Radiotherapy may affect the function of your pacemaker. Please inform our staff if you have a cardiac pacemaker

6. How should I prepare for the radiotherapy?

- Avoid applying skin care products, including but not limited to ointment, creams, body oils, perfumes, deodorants or powders on treatment area, unless instructed by doctor
- You can wash the treatment area gently with lukewarm water then pad dry with clean soft cloth. However, avoid all types of soap
- Be careful not to wash off the skin marks for treatment setup. If the skin marks come off, inform our radiotherapists and do not attempt to redraw them yourself
- Be gentle with the skin, keep it clean and dry. Do not rub, scratch or scrub the skin in treatment area. Ice packs, heating pads and adhesive tape should be avoided from irritating the skin
- Wear loosely fitting cotton clothing. Avoid tight clothing , wool, nylon or rough linen which might rub against and irritate the skin
- Avoid exposure to the sun on treatment area as much as possible
- Do not swim in salt or chlorinated water unless the skin reaction is subsided after the treatment
- Drink more water and avoid alcoholic drinks
- Choose nutritious food such as those rich in protein and calories
- Maintain sufficient rest
- The skin reaction will gradually subside after the treatment. You should however continue the above skin care procedures for 2-3 weeks after the end of treatment
- Consult doctor or radiotherapists for severe skin reaction such as liquid oozing and breakdown of skin

Disclaimer

This leaflet only provides general information pertaining to this operation / procedure. While common risks and complications are described, the list is not exhaustive, and the degree of risk could also vary between patients. Please contact your doctor for detailed information and specific enquiry.

Reference

Smart Patient Website of Hospital Authority: Palliative Radiotherapy (6/2020)

<p>Patient's Label Patient Name: _____ Hospital No: _____ Episode No: _____</p>

Patient's Signature: _____ Date: _____