



Radiotherapy Information Sheet

Introduction

Radiotherapy uses radiation beam to kill cancer cells while preserving nearby normal tissues as much as possible. Radiotherapy can be delivered in several ways, with different machines, techniques, number of treatment fractions and dosage. The oncologist will choose the best treatment method for you.

For cancer in thorax or abdomen region, external high energy beams are usually used for radiotherapy treatment, which is usually given 5 times a week for 5 to 6 weeks. It could also be used concurrently with or without chemotherapy. The radiation beams do not make you radioactive, therefore it is safe for you to contact with people, including infants or pregnant woman, after receiving the treatment.

Procedures

1. Moulding procedure

To immobilize and reproduce your body trunk during treatment, therapists will customize an easyfoam or vaclok to stabilize the thorax or abdomen region.

2. Computer Tomography scan

Patient will be positioned with customized mould to undergo CT scan. The CT scan acquires 3D images for oncologist to determine the treatment region and coverage.

3. Treatment planning

With the aid of computer, the most suitable treatment plan will be generated to achieve oncologist's goals. The process takes several days since the dose will be calculated repeatedly and reviewed by oncologist to attain the best result.

4. Treatment

No pain will be experienced during the radiotherapy treatment, it is similar to taking an X-ray. You only have to lie on top of the treatment couch with the tailor-made immobilization mould. Radiation therapists will position your body, then leave the room and monitor your condition closely through the CCTV. You can speak to the therapists through the intercom or press the call bell should you have urgent needs. After verification of the image and readjustment by the treatment machine, the radiation beam will be delivered. The treatment takes around 30 minutes and please keep still during the whole process.

Patient's Label Patient Name: _____ Hospital No: _____ Episode No: _____
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Common side effects and coping approaches

Side effect	Coping approaches
General: Fatigue Loss of appetite Cough Abdomen bloating or pain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get plenty of rest to restore energy 2. Try small frequent meals with high energy and protein inclusive 3. Try to keep markings on skin, do not redraw by yourself if faded away or blurred 4. Drink water frequently 5. Keep body weight 6. Take meal supplements if needed
Skin reactions: Dry and itchy Reddening Sensitive, tender Peeling or blistering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid rubbing, scrubbing or scratching the treatment area 2. Keep short fingernails to prevent accidental scratching of skin 3. Wash skin with warm water only and gently pat dry with soft towel 4. Avoid using soap or body wash 5. Do not use non-prescribed gel, cream, perfume or deodorants 6. Wear loose cotton clothes to avoid friction on treatment area 7. Avoid swimming, spa, sauna or sunbath during treatment and 2 weeks afterwards 8. Avoid shaving treated area, use electrical shavers if necessary
Diarrhea	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replenish electrolytes or sport drinks 2. Avoid dietary fiber rich food such as vegetables or fruits 3. Ask doctor for anti-diarrheal drug if needed

Patient's Label

Patient Name: _____
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Points for attention

- Radiotherapy can cause teratogenicity. Therefore, both male and female patients should take contraceptive measures during radiotherapy.
- Radiotherapy may affect the function of pacemaker. Please inform our staff if you have a cardiac pacemaker.
- Please inform doctor and radiotherapists if you have undergone radiotherapy. Additional radiation on previous treatment site might cause severe complications.
- Consult doctor or radiotherapists for any illness or severe skin reaction such as liquid oozing and breakdown of skin.
- The skin reaction will gradually subside 2-3 weeks after the treatment. During this period, you should continue the above skin care procedures.

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

HA Smart Patients

<https://www21.ha.org.hk/smartpatient/SPW/en-us/Disease-Information/Disease/?guid=3811ed4c-10bc-43f3-bfcc-e8ea8d747619>

Cancer Research UK

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-in-general/treatment/radiotherapy/side-effects>

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Patient's Signature: _____ Date: _____