

Drinking plenty of fluids will help and you may be asked to give a urine sample so that we can check there is no infection in the bladder.

Final Note: The staff in the Oncology Department are here to help you. If you have any problems or worries, please seek our help and advice.

Useful Numbers:

Radiotherapy (Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm)

Tel: 01522 572268

Out of Hours/Bank Holidays

Waddington Unit

Tel: 01522 572255/572257

Helpful Websites:

Lincolnshire Oncology Centre

www.ulh.nhs.uk/services/cancer-services/

Macmillan Cancer Support

www.macmillan.org.uk/

Cancer Research UK

www.cancerresearchuk.org

References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.



If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille please email the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

Radiotherapy to the Bladder

Lincolnshire Oncology Centre
Radiotherapy
Chemotherapy (Ingham Suite)
Lincoln County Hospital
01522 572268
www.ulh.nhs.uk

The aim of this leaflet is to support you during your treatment and remind you of the information given by your doctor and radiographers.

If you have a pacemaker or ICD (Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator) please let staff know as this is important information when planning your treatment.

What is Radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy is the controlled and precise use of radiation to treat cancer and some non-cancerous conditions. **External Beam Radiotherapy** is delivered using a machine called a Linear Accelerator (Linac), pictured below. The radiation is given through the skin to the area affected, often from multiple directions. This is completely painless and treatment takes minutes.

Radiotherapy is often used in combination with surgery, chemotherapy and hormone therapy. Each person's treatment is different and planned individually.



mild redness to feeling quite sore with some skin peeling. We tend to see worse reactions where there are natural skin folds or friction, for example, in the groins and between the buttocks.

It is fine to wash as normal and for you to continue with your usual soap, shower gel and deodorant.

We do ask that you avoid: talcum powder, medicated/antibiotic creams and extremes of temperature (hot water bottles/ice packs). You will be seen once a week by a Review Radiographer, who will advise you about any other care for your skin.

Fatigue

You may feel tired or lethargic during your radiotherapy treatment and for a number of weeks after your treatment has finished. This lethargy can also affect your mood and emotions. Keeping active can help combat fatigue but it is important to listen to your body and to rest if you feel unwell.

Bowel Problems

You may have some looseness or diarrhoea as the treatment progresses. This is normal and the Radiographers will be able to give you medication to control this.

You may feel you want to open your bowels often, but pass little or nothing. This is called **Tenesmus** and can be eased by the use of special enemas. You may also notice some pain on opening your bowels and occasionally some blood in your stools. Some people develop abdominal pains as the bowel can spasm but we can ease this with medication also.

Bladder Irritation

Most people will notice increased bladder irritation during treatment. This is called **Radiation Cystitis** and symptoms include:

- pain/burning on passing urine
- the feeling you need to urinate often (small amounts)
- sometimes there is blood/mucus in the urine

Treatment

The number of treatments, sometimes called fractions, varies and will be discussed with you by your Doctor. Radiotherapy is usually given as an out-patient with daily treatments from Monday to Friday each week. Treatment is painless and very quick (minutes) and although the Radiographers leave the room to treat you, they can see you on closed circuit cameras at all times. It is important that you keep as still as possible and breathe normally but if you need the Radiographers during your treatment, please raise your hand and they will come straight to you.

You will not be radioactive during your treatment and it is safe for you to be with other people, including children.

Follow-up

You will be seen by your Consultant 4-8 weeks after completing your treatment. This appointment will be where you were originally seen (i.e. not always in Lincoln). You will also be given a finishing letter from the department with information and contact numbers for once you are finished.

Possible Side Effects

Radiotherapy affects people in different ways and you may experience different side effects to someone having similar treatment to you.

Radiotherapy is a localised treatment, which means only the area having treatment will be affected. Radiotherapy has a build-up effect and often people do not notice any side effects until about 10 days into a course, but this also means that side effects will continue for a couple of weeks after treatment too. **Some patients may have some permanent side effects from treatment but this will be discussed with you.**

Skin

Most people will have a skin reaction, but this will vary from

Preparing For Your Treatment

If you currently smoke, then stopping smoking before you start your radiotherapy is one of the best things you can do to help yourself. Smoking can worsen side effects from Radiotherapy and also limit the effectiveness of treatment.

There is help available to support you.

QUIT 51 Stop Smoking Service. Please ring **0800 622 6968** OR text 'smokefree' to **66777** to refer yourself to the service.

If you are unable to stop smoking completely then we advise stopping for 2 hours before and 2 hours after your treatment.

It is important to eat a well-balanced healthy diet with plenty of fluids while preparing for and having treatment. If you are having problems with your appetite or need any advice please speak to the staff.

Staying active is very important. The benefits of exercise are not just physical. Exercise can help lift your mood and alleviate fatigue. A gentle walk, gardening or house work can help to keep you more active, but it is important to listen to your body.

Getting to the Department

The Radiotherapy Department is the large building to the left of Main Reception, opposite the staff car park. There is a coffee/snack shop (open from 9.00am until 3.00pm). There are toilets and water available in our waiting room.

Reception

When you first arrive you will need to book in to reception. On your first visit a Radiographer will come and explain what will happen and answer any questions and our receptionists are always happy to assist you.

Parking

There is free parking for all people having Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy. Our reception staff will validate your parking ticket each day as you leave the department.

If you park in the Disabled Car Park, you will need to take your blue badge in to the Main Reception on your first visit and they will reimburse you. On subsequent visits (for treatment), the oncology receptionists will issue you a card with your treatment dates on it to display alongside your blue badge in the car.

Arranging Transport

If you are able to get to the hospital, either by car or by public transport, this is the preferred option. This is perfectly acceptable unless your doctor has advised you otherwise. There are regular buses that come in to the hospital site, please see the stage coach website for details.

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/>

There is also a service called **Call Connect**, which is a minibus service that can be booked from around Lincolnshire - see the website below for details:

www.lincsinterconnect.com

There are also voluntary car schemes which can be booked via the Lincolnshire County Council website. Please note there is a subsidised charge to this service.

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/.../community-transport/28561.article>

If you have problems travelling from home each day we may be able to offer help with transport. Please note that there are criteria for ambulance bookings and you may not be eligible. If

you use the ambulance service you should be aware that you will be away from home for at least half a day. Transport is for the benefit of patients only and escorts may only be booked in exceptional circumstances; please discuss this with the staff.



Treatment Planning

Your first appointment will be a planning session. This will be in our CT Scanner (pictured above).

You will need to have emptied your bladder before this scan and before every treatment session.

This scan allows us to plan exactly where you will have your treatment and the best position for you to lie in.

We will ask to make some permanent skin marks (little ink dots) to help position you accurately for each treatment.

Planning

There may be a number of weeks between your planning appointment and starting treatment. It takes time to plan your treatment. This is a complicated process that involves a number of staff but ensures the best treatment for you.