

INTRODUCTION

Your Radiation Oncologist has decided that you would benefit from a course of Radiation Therapy to the Pelvis area, this treatment will be designed specifically for you.

This leaflet has been designed to give information and advice to help you understand the side effects that you may experience during this treatment. While your Radiation Therapy is designed to minimise side effects as much as possible, we want to warn you about potential side effects at the outset, so that you are not alarmed if/when they develop.

Radiation Therapy is a form of treatment that affects only a very specific part of the body, the area being treated. The side effects it causes will be limited to this area as well.

Your Radiation Therapists will advise you if there is anything that you need to do to prepare for your Radiation Therapy. In some instances a full bladder or empty bladder may be required. In most instances for Radiation Therapy to the pelvis no treatment preparation is necessary.

Temporary Skin Changes:

Temporary skin changes within the treated area, particularly around the back passage, may occur. Usually these include redness, dryness, scaling, and itching of the area. Skin changes usually occur one to two weeks after your treatment begins and may last for a few weeks after your last treatment. Please follow the advice in our Information leaflet on Skin Care during Radiation Therapy. Wear loose cotton clothing next to the skin.

Sexual Concerns:

Drink at least six to eight glasses of water daily throughout your Radiation Therapy, unless your Doctor has restricted the amount of fluids you can drink because of another medical condition. This should be continued for two or three weeks after your last treatment. Avoid drinking liquids in the evening and before bedtime, so you can rest comfortably at night. Alcoholic beverages and beverages containing caffeine may irritate your bladder. Let us know if you are experiencing this problem as your Radiation Oncologist may prescribe medication to alkalize your urine which will minimise the discomfort.

Bowel changes such as

Cramping/Diarrhea/Constipation:

Radiation Therapy can irritate the rectum (back passage) and cause discomfort and more frequent bowel movements (diarrhoea).

Radiation Therapy to the pelvis is commonly given to patients with cancers of the rectum, anal canal and colon. It is often given in conjunction with chemotherapy which can worsen the side effects discussed here.

It is important that you inform your Radiation Therapist, Nurse or Radiation Oncologist if you have any of these symptoms, as medication can be prescribed for you to help minimise your discomfort.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING TREATMENT?

Remember! Everyone is different and not everyone will experience reactions.

You may experience some sexual concerns while you are receiving treatment. Radiation Therapy to the pelvis may also affect your fertility, either temporarily or permanently, as sperm production can be altered. If you have any concerns, please talk to the Nurse or Radiation Oncologist, who can help put you at your ease.

Urinary Changes

Difficulty urinating (passing water), or urinating more often than usual (particularly at night), may occur a few weeks into your treatment. These symptoms are caused by cystitis brought on by your Radiation Therapy.

- Loose, frequent bowel movements may occur a few weeks into treatment.
 - A low-residue (low fibre) diet may be suggested for you to follow throughout your Radiation Therapy to control side effects of treatment.
 - Eat small frequent meals instead of three large meals a day.
 - Avoid very hot or cold food and drinks.
 - Ask your Radiation Oncologist or Nurse to suggest medications or products you may use to help relieve the discomfort of your irritated rectal area. Your Radiation Oncologist may prescribe medications that decrease the frequency of bowel movements.
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Hair Loss:

You may lose some hair in the pubic region, this is entirely normal if it happens. It is usually temporary and the hair will start to grow back within a few months of completing your treatment.

Fatigue/Tiredness:

Rest when possible. Follow the advice in our Information Leaflet on Fatigue.

All the side effects relevant to your Radiation Therapy will be fully discussed with you before your treatment begins.

If you have any questions or problems at any time during your treatment, bring them to the attention of anyone on your radiation therapy treatment team – they are the best people to advise and help you.

Please use this space for questions and notes.

**RADIATION THERAPY
TO THE MALE PELVIS**



USEFUL INFORMATION

Address: UPMC Whitfield Cancer Centre,
Cork Road, Co. Waterford



Telephone: 051337444

Website: UPMCWhitfieldCancerCentre.ie