

INTRODUCTION

You are scheduled to receive Radiation Therapy treatments designed specifically for you.

Radiation Therapy may be given to the brain for a number of conditions:

- A primary brain tumour, for example astrocytomas or glioblastoma multiforme (GBM). In these cases, high doses of radiation are targeted at specific areas within the brain where visible deposits exist or post-operatively to the site from which the tumour was removed.
- A metastatic (secondary) tumour, which can develop from primary breast, rectum or lung cancers. In these cases, Radiation Therapy is given to the whole brain, meaning that not only the lesions that may be visible on scans is treated, but also any microscopic cancerous cells

the brain, the aim is to decrease any raised pressure in the skull, and in turn decrease the headaches, nausea, vomiting and seizures that can be associated with it.

If you don't have any of the symptoms listed above, Radiation Therapy may still be given as it can help to prevent the development of these symptoms.

Steroids may be given in conjunction with your Radiation Therapy which can also help to decrease the pressure within the skull.

Some patients may also be given a type of Chemotherapy, a drug called Temozolamide or Temodol, which they will take while having their Radiation Therapy. It is important to take these tablets exactly as prescribed by your Oncologist.

Having Radiation Therapy to the brain may

It may be temporary or permanent, depending upon the dose of radiation and your particular treatment plan. If your hair loss is temporary, it usually takes at least a few months before your hair will begin to grow back and the hair may grow back a different colour or texture than before. Many people choose a wig or toupee that matches their hair colour and style before hair loss begins. This can reduce the stress you may feel from a possible change in your appearance.

Nausea and Vomiting:

If you are experiencing any nausea and vomiting, please inform your Radiation Therapists and they will be able to help you.

Fatigue/Tiredness:

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

that can't be detected.

- Prophylactic Cranial Irradiation (PCI) is used in some patients with certain types of cancer which commonly spread to the brain, even if they have no visible signs of brain lesions. In these cases the whole brain is treated to prevent the development of secondary brain tumours.

Cancerous tumours in the brain can cause an increase in pressure within the skull which can lead to headaches, nausea, and dizziness.

HOW WILL I BENEFIT FROM RADIATION THERAPY?

By delivering a course of Radiation Therapy to

reduce any existing symptoms, prevent their development and give you a better quality of life for a longer time.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING TREATMENT

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 however, so that you are not alarmed if/when they develop.

Hair Thinning and Hair Loss:

Radiation Therapy to the Brain will cause hair loss within the treatment area.

Temporary Skin Changes:

Temporary changes to your scalp may gradually occur during treatment. These may include redness, dryness, scaling, and itchiness of the treated area. These skin changes usually occur one to two weeks after your treatment begins and may last for one to two weeks after your last treatment.

Use baby shampoo or a mild shampoo that is fragrance-free. These shampoos are less irritating to sensitive skin. You may gently massage the scalp when shampooing. Avoid using water that is too hot, keep it lukewarm.

be used. Since the area being treated will always be more sensitive than the rest of your skin, protect the area from sun exposure even after your treatment ends.

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 team – they are the best people to advise and help you.

USEFUL INFORMATION

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

Telephone: 051337444

Website:

UPMCWhitfieldCancerCentre.ie