

Skin

The skin will become sore and reddened towards the end of the course of treatment. A moisturising cream should be applied to the area twice daily during treatment. These areas will be monitored by the radiographers during the course of radiotherapy.

Spinal cord

The spinal cord carries the messages from the brain to the rest of the body. Particular care is exercised in the planning stages to ensure that the dose to this structure is kept within safe limits. Damage to the spinal cord is extremely rare.

Parking permit:

You will be given a parking permit to use in one of the radiotherapy parking spaces; this has to be returned at the end of radiotherapy.

Post Radiotherapy

If you need assistance after radiotherapy has finished please contact

Upper GI Nurse Specialist 01803 655890

Macmillan Radiographer 01803 654273

For further information there are booklets available
FREE OF CHARGE FROM MACMILLAN Cancer Support

Freephone 0808 808 00 00 (Mon-Fri 9am-8pm)



**PATIENT
INFORMATION**

Cancer of the Oesophagus (Long course)

Radiotherapy information for
Torbay Hospital patients

The following information is not intended to be comprehensive, but should give you an idea of what to expect during and soon after your radiotherapy treatment here at Torbay.

General Principles of Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy means the delivery of powerful x-ray beams to a carefully defined area of the body containing a cancer or from where the cancer has been removed.

The type of radiotherapy you will receive is called “external beam”. This means that the radiation is delivered from a machine, which generates x-rays, a “linear accelerator”. The radiation is only produced when the machine is turned on so once your treatment is finished you do not become radioactive.

Arrangements for your Radiotherapy

You will be telephoned with an appointment for a CT scan.

It is very important that we can target the radiotherapy as accurately as possible. To this end, a CT scan with you lying in the same position as for the radiotherapy itself, enables us to locate the area to be treated.

In order to enhance the area we need to treat, we will need to introduce a contrast agent in to your body during the scan.

You will have some small permanent marks on your skin, with your consent. These are used to help reproduce your position accurately during treatment. If you do not wish to have these marks, then the radiographers will discuss other options plus the additional responsibilities on your part to ensure temporary marks are not lost.

Photographs/electronic images will also be acquired, with your

consent. These will be filed in your Oncology notes or stored electronically

Verification: A further image may be taken on the treatment set to confirm your position prior to commencing treatment.

Treatment Details

Treatment is given daily Monday to Friday but not at weekends. There will be 20-28 treatments in total, each lasting approximately 15 minutes. Images will be taken on the linear accelerator to check your position during treatment.

Side Effects

Radiotherapy will affect some of your normal tissues in the area being treated. You may feel tired or nauseated; you will not lose your hair.

Oesophagus

You may experience difficulty swallowing but there are medications that can help. Symptoms should pass off within 2 months. The radiographers and dietitian will give advice with regard to a soft diet but dietary supplements and artificial feeding may become necessary during this period.

Lungs

The lungs are very sensitive to radiation and it is possible that part of the lungs will be inflamed. However, the effect on you should be minimal. A slight cough or breathlessness could be caused.