

## Testes

If the testicles are close to the radiotherapy beam, it is possible that this could result in sterility but cannot be relied upon as a method of contraception. It is very unlikely that the male sex hormone levels (testosterone) will be affected by radiotherapy. The dose to the testicles can be estimated and measured during treatment.

## Skin

The skin may become sore and reddened towards the end of the course of radiotherapy. Moisturising cream can be applied to reddened areas. Any itchy areas may need a steroid cream which has to be prescribed. The skin may break down in parts; specific creams can help this situation. Your skin is closely monitored during treatment.

**Parking Permit:** You will be given a permit to use for 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

Colorectal Nurse Specialist	01803 655551
Macmillan Radiographer	01803 654273
Cancer Support Lodge	01803 617521

For further information there are booklets available **FREE OF CHARGE FROM Macmillan Cancer Support**  
**Freephone 0808 808 00 00 (Mon-Fri 9am-8pm)**

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Cancer of the Abdominal Organ (Male)

Radiotherapy Information for  
Torbay Hospital Patients

Working with you, for you

## **Introduction**

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 a 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.

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 kept in your 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

Extra treatments may be arranged if days are missed due to machine breakdown.

The number of treatments will depend on the type of tumour but is likely to be 25 or more, each lasting approximately 15 minutes. Occasionally up to 5 extra treatments may be needed at the end. At least one x-ray will be taken with the linear accelerator during treatment to check on your position.

## **Side effects**

Radiotherapy will affect some of your normal tissues. You may feel tired and nauseated; you will not lose your hair. The small bowel, stomach, kidneys, spinal cord and testes may be affected as follows:

### **Small bowel**

Any small bowel in the radiation field will cause you to have diarrhoea possibly with some cramping abdominal pains. Antidiarrheal medication can help in this situation. This should pass off within a month of completing radiotherapy. It is unusual to experience any permanent damage.

### **Stomach**

If a significant amount of stomach is included in the volume you may feel nauseated, there are a variety of anti-sickness medications that can be tried.

### **Kidneys**

The kidneys are sensitive to radiation. The dose can be limited by shielding the kidneys provided this does not shield the tumour.

The function of the kidneys may be assessed prior to radiotherapy. Irradiation of too much kidney can result in permanent damage or blood pressure problems.

### **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.