

Medication

Steroids (Dexamethasone) are designed to reduce swelling in the brain. If you are taking steroids the ideal dose is the lowest that will control your symptoms. There will be an effort to reduce the dose as much as possible as there are side effects from prolonged use

As the dose is reduced you may experience a flare-up of your symptoms, if so the dose will need to be increased to the previous level that controlled your symptoms.

Anti Epileptics

Any medication prescribed to control fits should be continued.

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

Further Information

Macmillan Radiographer **01803 654273**

Cancer Support Lodge **01803 671521**

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**

Radiotherapy for Brain Metastases

Radiotherapy information for
Torbay Hospital patients

Information on Radiotherapy for Brain Metastases

This information is designed to be read in conjunction with the "What is Radiotherapy" booklet.

The Planning Procedure

It is very important that we can target the radiotherapy as accurately as possible.

In order to hold your head in the required position during treatment, a plastic shell may be made for you. Alternatively, your head will be held in position using tape. The shells will be made here in Torbay.

A CT planning scan with you lying in the same position as for the radiotherapy itself and wearing the shell (if provided), locates the area to be treated.

Photographs/electronic images will also be acquired, with your consent. These will be kept in your notes or stored electronically.

There will be a delay of a few days whilst all the information is transferred to a specialised computer and used to produce a treatment plan.

When you attend the department for your first treatment, x-ray images of the final radiotherapy fields (verification) will be taken prior to your actual treatment.

Treatment Details

Treatment is given daily but not over the weekend. There will probably be 5 treatments in total, each lasting approximately 10 minutes. Occasionally 2 treatments are given and sometimes 10. Your consultant will let you know which regime you are having.

Possible Side Effects

Radiotherapy will affect some of your normal tissues in the area being treated. You may feel tired or nauseated.

The skin, hair and brain may be affected as follows:

Skin

The skin will become sore and reddened towards the end of the course of radiotherapy. To lessen this, a moisturising cream should be applied to the treatment area throughout the treatment. Your skin is closely monitored during treatment.

Hair

Parts of the scalp in the radiation beam may lose hair and it is possible that this hair loss will be permanent.

Brain

The brain will temporarily swell as a result of radiotherapy; the effect wears off after one or two months. This can cause a flare up of your first symptoms. The usual treatment is to increase the dose of steroids.

Radiotherapy can also cause tiredness that can occur up to two months after radiotherapy (somnolence). This should pass off gradually, but there is no specific treatment.