

## Eyes

The pituitary gland lies close to the nerves passing back from the eyes to the brain. These nerves are quite sensitive to radiotherapy, though the risk of damage causing visual impairment is very low indeed. It seems that the risk is even lower with modern radiotherapy techniques and spreading the treatment over five weeks.

## Second Cancers

Some specialists believe slightly more tumours can develop up to 20 years after successful treatment for pituitary tumours than in the rest of the population. The risk is very low and other specialists have not found this to be the case.

If this is true it is not clear whether this is due to the treatment or if it would have happened anyway. This risk is considered alongside the risk that you would face if no treatment was given at all.

## Parking During Radiotherapy

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

## Post Radiotherapy

If you need any assistance after radiotherapy has finished, please contact:

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

**Macmillan Radiographer**

**01803 654273**

---

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

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Pituitary Tumour

## 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 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**

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

A shell will be made for you to wear during your radiotherapy. This keeps you still and improves accuracy by allowing marks to be put onto the shell. The shell will be made in the mould room of the Oncology Department in Exeter.

A CT scan undertaken in Torbay, with you lying in the same position as for the radiotherapy itself and wearing the shell, enables us to locate the area to be treated.

Photographs/electronic images will 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.

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

## **Treatment Details**

Treatment is given daily Monday to Friday but not at weekends. There will be 25 treatments in total, each lasting approximately 15 minutes. Extra treatments may be arranged if days are missed due to machine breakdown

At least one image 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, or nauseated.

The skin, hair, hormone levels and eyes may be affected as follows:

### **Skin**

The skin will become sore and reddened towards the end of the course of radiotherapy. Moisturising cream can be applied to reddened area. The skin may break down in parts; specific creams can help this situation. Your skin is closely monitored during treatment.

### **Hair**

The parts of the scalp in the radiation beam will lose hair. It is possible that this hair loss will be permanent.

### **Hormones**

The pituitary gland stimulates all the organs of the body producing hormones (messages). These organs are your thyroid gland, testicles/ovaries, adrenal glands (steroids) and the female breast (breast feeding only). You will need to be closely monitored by an Endocrinologist and will probably require replacement hormones. It can take many years for the levels of hormones to fall.