

Skin

The skin may become sore and reddened towards the end of the course of radiotherapy. Moisturising cream can be applied to any reddened areas. The skin may break down in parts, particularly in the creases. Specific medications can help this situation. The groins can be very sensitive if your treatment is in this area. Your skin will be closely monitored during treatment.

Ovaries

The ovaries may be close to the radiation beam if the upper leg is being treated and are very sensitive. There will be no effect if you have already gone through the menopause. If you have not, the radiotherapy may stop the ovaries from working and cause an early menopause. It should be possible to estimate the risk of this happening if this is important to you. The menopause means you may be unable to have children and will no longer produce the female hormones. HRT can be discussed with you if desired.

Parking during Treatment

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:

Macmillan Radiographer **01803 654273**

Sarcoma Nurse Specialist (Exeter) **01392 402720**

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

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

PATIENT INFORMATION

Sarcoma of Limb (Female)

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 Perspex shell may be made to secure the limb during your radiotherapy treatment, to improve accuracy. The shell will be made in the mould room in the Exeter Oncology Centre.

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

With your consent, you may have some small permanent tattoos placed on your skin. 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 any temporary marks are not lost.

Photographs of your treatment position will also be taken, 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. There will be 30 treatments in total, including the final phase of treatment, each lasting approximately 15 minutes.

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

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, you are unlikely to feel sick and you will not lose your hair.

The limb itself, the skin and possibly the ovaries may be affected as follows:

Limb

The limb can become slightly swollen and this can persist. The lymph drainage channels can be damaged. It may be necessary to arrange help from the Lymphoedema Service. The limb may become stiff and every effort should be made to keep it moving and as supple as possible.