

You will be seen by your oncologist every week during your treatment and you can be seen at any time by a review radiographer if you are feeling unwell.

Long term side effects

These may occur months or years after radiotherapy has been given:

- small bowel damage – this may cause pain, abdominal bloating and diarrhoea
- stomach ulcers
- kidney damage

Improvements to radiotherapy planning and treatment techniques have made long term side effects from radiotherapy less likely. Your oncologist will discuss any likely side effects with you before you begin your treatment.

General advice

Everyone having radiotherapy is different. Your treatment is specific to you as is the way you react to it. If you are worried about anything, however trivial you think it may seem, please speak to the radiographers, as they will be able to help.

Data protection

All personal details and photographs taken during radiotherapy will be used in accordance with this Trust's policy on protection and use of patient information.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690



Radiotherapy to the pancreas



One + all | we care

The name of your consultant is:

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The radiographer who explained the treatment to you is:

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You can contact us on:

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What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy treats cancer by using high energy X-rays. These X-rays can destroy cancer cells while doing as little harm as possible to normal cells. Radiotherapy may be given following surgery or it may be given instead of surgery along with chemotherapy.

Radiotherapy is completely painless and treatment can take between 10 or 20 minutes.

How often will I need radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy is usually given as a course of treatment. It is given daily during the week with a break at weekends. The course may last from 5 days to 6 weeks. Your oncologist (cancer specialist) will decide how many treatments you need and will explain why.

What is a planning scan?

Before you start radiotherapy it is essential that we carefully plan the area to be treated. The most accurate way of doing this is by means of a CT scan. This is in addition to any diagnostic scans you may have already had.

You will be asked to lie on a special mattress which looks like a bean bag. When you are in a comfortable position the radiographers vacuum seal the mattress so that it retains your shape. This will then be used exclusively for you each time you have your treatment, so ensuring that you are always lying in the correct position.

It may be necessary to use a contrast agent during this scan. This is given through a cannula (fine tube) which is inserted into a vein in your arm or hand. The contrast enhances the CT images to enable your oncologist to plan your treatment more accurately.

At the end of the scan you will be asked if we can make some small permanent marks (tattoos) on your skin. These will be small dots which will act as reference points and are used to ensure you are lying in the same position each time you are treated.

What happens on my first day of treatment?

One of the treatment radiographers will collect you from the waiting room and explain exactly how the treatment will be given. They will also ask you to confirm that you consent to having radiotherapy.

You will then be taken into the treatment room and asked to lie on the mattress that was prepared for you during your planning scan. The radiographers will take some time ensuring that you are comfortable and that everything is correctly aligned. The radiographers will tell you when they are leaving the room to start the treatment. Although they have left the room they can both see and hear you throughout the treatment.

For the first few days the radiographers will do a short CT scan before starting the treatment. This is compared with the planning scan to ensure you are in the correct position.

What side effects can I expect?

Short term side effects

These may occur during and immediately after your course of treatment:

- nausea and vomiting – this can be controlled by anti-sickness tablets
- diarrhoea – this can also be controlled with anti- diarrhoea tablets
- indigestion and/or heartburn
- tiredness and weakness
- loss of appetite and weight loss – you will be reviewed by a dietitian weekly during your treatment. She will monitor your weight and ensure that you are able to take sufficient nutrients.