



**Mount Vernon
Cancer Centre**



**East and North Hertfordshire
NHS Trust**

Radiotherapy

an easy-read guide





What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy uses X-rays to kill cancer cells.
It uses a special machine that moves around you.



The people who use these machines are called radiographers.



Radiotherapy is given every day except Saturday and Sunday.

Your doctor will tell you how many treatments you will have.

Number of treatments

Planning your radiotherapy

You will need to come to the hospital for an appointment to plan your radiotherapy.

A member of staff will tell you what will happen during this appointment.

Identification

Each time you come to the hospital the staff will ask you for your:

- name
- date of birth
- address



A machine called a CT scanner will take pictures of inside your body. You will not feel anything. You will need to take some clothes off but the radiographers will keep you covered as much as possible.



- Lie on the bed
- Stay very still
- Marks will be drawn on your skin
- Stickers will be put on your skin (these are taken off afterwards)
- Small black dots will be tattooed on your skin. These will help the radiographers get you in the right position for your treatment.

Your radiotherapy will start 2–3 weeks after your planning scan.

Your radiotherapy will start on:

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Consent

Consent means that you understand why you need to have the treatment and that you are happy to have the treatment the doctor has talked to you about. You will be asked to sign a consent form.



Radiotherapy

A radiographer will talk to you before you have your first treatment and will explain what will happen.



You will need to take some clothes off like you did when you had your planning scan.

You will need to lie down and keep very still for the treatment. Breathe normally.



The machine moves around you but it will not touch you.

The radiographers will leave the room to give you your treatment.



They are watching you all the time. You can talk to them and they can talk to you.

You will hear a buzzing sound when the machine is on.

You will not feel anything when you have the treatment.

Your treatment will take between 10-20 minutes.

You will need to come back to the hospital each day (Monday to Friday) until you have finished all your treatments.

Side effects from radiotherapy

You may have some side effects from your treatment. These will depend on what part of your body you are having treated.

Your doctor will tell you which side effects you may get.



If you feel unwell during your radiotherapy please tell the radiographers.

The doctor may give you some medicines to help with your side effects.

Here are some possible side effects:

Tiredness



You may feel tired, so rest when you feel you need to.

Sore skin



You may get some sore skin in the area you are having treated. If your skin is sore please tell the radiographers. They will tell you what to do.

Sickness



Some people may feel sick. If you feel sick, please tell the radiographers. You may need some medicine from your doctor.

Loss of appetite



You may not feel hungry. Try eating little meals and snacks instead of big meals.

Diarrhoea



Some people get diarrhoea (thin watery poos). If you have diarrhoea please tell the radiographers. You may need some medicine from your doctor.

Feeling anxious, worried or sad



It is important to talk to a friend and tell them how you are feeling.

After radiotherapy

You will be given an appointment to see your doctor about 6 weeks after you have finished your treatment.

Contacts

Specialist nurse:

Radiotherapy Clinic Nurses 020 3826 2186

Radiotherapy Clinic Radiographers 020 3826 2612

Accessibility Coordinators 020 3826 2217
07917 837274

Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre 020 3826 2555