

CyberKnife® treatment

Patient Information Series PI72

This booklet is a general guide for patients receiving CyberKnife treatment at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre and **must be read with** one of the following information sheets:

- CyberKnife® treatment for prostate cancer (PI72a)
- CyberKnife® treatment to the brain (PI72b)
- CyberKnife® treatment for lung cancer (PI72c)
- CyberKnife® treatment for pancreatic cancer (PI72d)
- CyberKnife® treatment for liver cancer (PI72e)
- CyberKnife® treatment to the spine (PI72f)


East and North Hertfordshire
NHS Trust



Mount Vernon
Cancer Centre



Contacts

Your Oncologist is Dr/Prof:

Your Oncologist secretary:

Your hospital number:

Your treatment start date:

Length of your course of treatment:

Radiotherapy clinic radiographers: . 020 3826 2612 / 2613
or 07825 024058

CyberKnife Treatment Unit..... 020 3826 2623

Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre: 020 3826 2555

Your follow-up will be at:

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.....

24 hour Acute Oncology Service
Mount Vernon Cancer Centre: 07825 028855

Cyberknife® treatment at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

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Introduction

This booklet is a general guide for patients receiving CyberKnife treatment at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre and must be read with one of the following information sheets:

CyberKnife® treatment for prostate cancer (PI 72a)

CyberKnife® treatment to the brain (PI 72b)

CyberKnife® treatment for lung cancer (PI 72c)

CyberKnife® treatment for pancreatic cancer (PI 72d)

CyberKnife® treatment for liver cancer (PI 72e)

CyberKnife® treatment to the spine (PI 72f)

Your oncologist or radiographer will give you this booklet and the information sheet you need.

We hope this information will answer most of your questions. If there is anything that is unclear, or if you still have questions, please ask a member of the team caring for you (see page 2 for contact details). The CyberKnife is a radiotherapy machine which produces high energy x-rays. The treatment unit is supported on a robotic arm which allows the treatment to be given from any angle. It enables high doses of radiation to be delivered with extreme accuracy, as it has the ability to track the tumour's position during the treatment, even with small movements such as breathing.

CyberKnife treatment is painless and is similar to having an X-ray taken. You should not see or feel anything during the time it takes to deliver the treatment.

CyberKnife treatment does not make you radioactive. It is perfectly safe for you to be with people, including children.

Who will be looking after me?

A specialist cancer doctor is known as a clinical oncologist¹.

The oncologist will plan and oversee your treatment, which will be carried out by therapy radiographers (health professionals who give radiotherapy) and their assistants.

You could be seen by both male and/or female radiographers when you have your planning and treatment.

Other people who may be looking after you during your treatment include:

- nurses / specialist nurses
- health care assistants
- counsellors
- dieticians
- medical physicists - specialists who make your treatment plan and radiation protection arrangements. They also take care of any other checks which are necessary before treatment begins, to make sure that the radiotherapy is safe and accurate.

¹ The term 'oncologist' refers to both your cancer specialist and any doctors working within his/her team.

What will happen during planning?

Please see your CyberKnife information sheet for planning instructions.

Before you begin your CyberKnife treatment you will visit the Radiotherapy Department to have your treatment planned. You may be in the department for a few hours.

Some patients may have to have tiny permanent metal markers, called fiducials, placed into or near the treatment area. If you need to have these, your Oncologist will discuss this with you. It is normally done as a day-case procedure at least a week before your planning appointment.

During your planning appointment you may have an immobilisation device made and/or a special support cushion made to fit you. This will help you stay in the correct position during treatment and make you more comfortable.

For your planning you will be placed in the position in which you will have your treatment. It should be comfortable so you can keep this position for 60 to 120 minutes (depending on the area you are having treated). For this reason it is important for you to say as soon as possible if your treatment position is not totally comfortable.

You will also have a CT scan as part of the treatment planning process. An injection of a special dye may be needed.

Using the information from your planning visit, your individual treatment plan is then calculated.

What happens during treatment?

Before you go into the treatment room, a member of the treatment team will explain to you what will happen and you will be able to ask questions.

During your treatment you will lie on the treatment couch, in the same position as for your planning scan.

When you are comfortable and in the right position, the radiographers will leave the room so that they can give you your treatment.

Each treatment may last between 30 to 120 minutes, depending on the area being treated. You are welcome to bring a CD with you which can be played in the treatment room to help you relax.

You will be alone in the room during your treatment but the radiographers will be able to see you all the time through closed circuit television.

Radiotherapy is completely painless and you can breathe normally during your treatment. The radiographers will tell you how to contact them in case you need any help during treatment. It is possible to switch off the machine and interrupt your treatment at any time, if it becomes necessary.

Do I have to stay in hospital?

If you are able to travel to the hospital for treatment, there is no need for you to stay in hospital. Most people are treated as outpatients.

What special care should I take during treatment?

Eating and drinking

It is important to continue to eat a normal healthy diet during your treatment. Try to drink up to two litres of fluid a day (which is the daily recommended intake).

Skin care

We recommend that you continue with your normal daily skin care. Use your normal soap/shower gel and if you use a moisturiser then continue as before.

You may swim during your treatment, but sometimes the chlorine in the water may irritate the skin in the treatment area. If this happens we would advise you to stop swimming until your skin reaction settles.

For further skin care advice please talk to the treatment team.

What are the side-effects of CyberKnife treatment?

CyberKnife treatment is given only to the area that needs the treatment, so side-effects are kept as few as possible. Your oncologist will explain the possible side-effects to you. If you are worried about anything, please talk to your oncologist or the radiographers treating you.

- Skin reactions

Towards the end of your treatment, or even after it has finished, you may find that your skin becomes red and itchy, as if you have sunburn. This can continue to increase for two weeks after the end of your treatment, but it will gradually stop. Use a moisturiser to help soothe your skin.

- Tiredness

You may feel tired, or have less energy than normal, during and also after your treatment. Please ask a member of your team for the factsheet 'Living with tiredness (fatigue)' or contact the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (see back of leaflet).

Please read your CyberKnife information sheet for more information about side effects you may get.

What special care should I take after treatment?

- Diet

It is important that you continue to eat well and drink plenty of fluids during and after your treatment. The Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC) has information available on healthy eating.

- Swimming

It is safe to swim after treatment, once your skin has recovered from any redness. This usually takes up to four weeks after treatment has finished.

- Sunbathing when treatment is finished

Do not expose the treated area of your skin to the sun straight after the end of your treatment. You will need to apply a high protective factor sun cream to the area which has been treated for the rest of your life, because your skin will always be more sensitive to the sun. It is not wise to become sunburnt on any part of your body.

Appointments

Please let us know if you have any holidays booked and we will try to fit in with your dates. However, appointment times will need to follow your treatment plan and must be booked for when your CyberKnife treatment team are available.

Follow-up care

You will be seen during your treatment by your oncologist or a member of his/her team.

When your treatment is over, you will have regular follow-up appointments. These will usually be with your Mount Vernon Cancer Centre oncologist or a doctor from his/her team at either the Cancer Centre or your district general hospital. You will be asked to have a follow-up scan, usually a few months after your treatment.

If you are concerned by any symptoms you may have between these appointments, please see your own GP, your oncologist or the CyberKnife radiographers at the Cancer Centre (see page 2 for contact details).

Car parking at the hospital



A Pay & Display parking scheme operates 24 hours a day. Cancer patients have a £1 concessionary parking rate but must register for this.

Registration forms are on the back of appointment letters or are available at the Cancer Centre Reception desk.

On your first visit, take your registration form to one of the following offices (Mon - Fri), where you will be given a yellow Concessionary Parking Pass:

- **Facilities Office:** 8am - 4pm
- **Car Parking Office:** 8am - 12pm and 1pm - 4pm
- **Post Room:** 8.30am - 12pm and 1pm - 4pm

Get a Concession/Blue Badge ticket for £1 at the Pay and Display machine and display this and your yellow pass on the car dashboard. Your yellow pass can be used in any car.

Blue badge holders do not need to register. Pay £1 at the Pay & Display machine. Please display your ticket and blue badge on your dashboard.

Getting help with paying for transport

If you are on a low income, you may be eligible for help with paying for the cost of transport to and from the hospital. This includes bus and train fares and car mileage but not taxi costs.

For further information about eligibility, please speak to Patient Affairs on 020 3826 2343 or visit www.direct.gov.uk and search for 'Travel costs'.

Other help and support

The Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC) offers information and support to patients and their families and is located next to Chemotherapy Suite by Gate 3. The staff at the LJMC work as part of the overall team caring for you.

People who have cancer often say that during their illness they experience a range of emotions. Many find it to be a stressful, anxious and confusing time. Please feel free to drop in before, during or after any of your visits to Mount Vernon Cancer Centre to find out more about the LJMC services that you may find helpful.

The volunteers and healthcare professionals at the LJMC provide help, support and information in a relaxed setting to help patients cope with cancer and its treatment.

LJMC services include a range of complementary therapies, counselling, relaxation sessions and financial advice. You can drop in without an appointment or call the LJMC helpline on 020 3826 2555. More information is on the back of this leaflet.

If you normally pay for NHS prescriptions

People undergoing treatment for cancer do not have to pay NHS prescription charges if they have a valid medical exemption certificate. To get an exemption certificate, ask your GP for an application form.

Consent

It is a legal requirement to have a signed consent form from you before the start of your treatment.

If you have already been given one of these forms, please bring the completed form with you when you come for your first appointment.

If you have not been given a form, this will be discussed with you at your first appointment.

Identification

Please note that it is a legal requirement for the staff to check your name and details against your treatment sheet every time you attend.

Pregnancy/fathering a child

Female patients must not be pregnant or become pregnant and male patients must not father a child during a course of radiotherapy or for some months afterwards. **Please discuss this with your cancer specialist.**

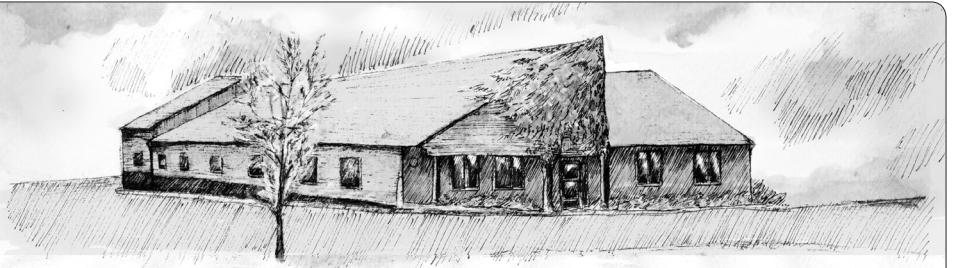
If you think there is a chance, however small, of you or your partner being pregnant during treatment, it is extremely important that you discuss this with your oncologist, radiographer or nurse as soon as possible.

Female patients will be asked to confirm their pregnancy status prior to radiotherapy. This applies to all women between the ages of 12 - 55 years. This is a legal requirement.

This publication has been produced by the Information team at the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre. Contributors include professionals, patients and carers from Mount Vernon Cancer Centre who have expertise and experience in the topics covered by this publication. All our publications are reviewed and updated regularly. If you would like any details of the references used to write this information please contact the

LJMC on 020 3826 2555.

Lynda Jackson 
Macmillan Centre



Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre

... supporting people affected by cancer...

- ① Drop-in centre for support and information
- ① Telephone helpline
- ① Complementary therapies*
- ① Counselling*
- ① Benefits advice*
- ① Relaxation classes
- ① Look Good...Feel Better™ beauty workshops
- ① The Way Ahead headwear workshops
- ① Self-help courses

The **Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre** is situated between the Cancer Centre and Gate 3 (White Hill)

Please drop in or call to find out how we may be able to help you

Opening hours: **Monday–Friday: 9.30am–4.30pm**

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2RN

Telephone Helpline: **020 3826 2555**

Website: **www.ljmc.org**

* Service only available to NHS patients under the care of an oncologist based at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre



Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre

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