



CyberKnife® treatment for prostate cancer

Information for patients at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

This leaflet **must be read with** the main CyberKnife® booklet PI72

What will happen during planning?

First planning appointment

During your first planning appointment tiny permanent metal markers called fiducials will be placed into your prostate. These markers are tiny gold pellets or rods about 5mm long. They help to make sure the treatment is given to the right place.

There will be three or four markers. It takes about ten minutes to place them and is done under local anaesthetic as a day case. The procedure will be done using ultrasound and is similar to having a prostate biopsy.

The markers are positioned by passing a needle through the area in between the scrotum and the anus. An ultrasound probe will be placed into the rectum to help guide the positioning of the markers.

There are very few side-effects from having the markers inserted. There is no sensation within the prostate gland, although the use of the rectal ultrasound and the needles can be uncomfortable.

There is a small chance of blood in the urine or the seminal fluid; this may last from a few days to a few weeks.

If you are taking any **steroids** or **anti-coagulants** (blood thinners e.g. Warfarin or Clopidogrel/Plavix, or blood thinning injections e.g. Fragmin), please contact the Brachytherapy Suite on 020 3826 2629 **as soon as possible before you attend for your appointment.**

If you have any questions or worries about this procedure, please speak to your oncologist.

Before your planning scans and treatment

It is important to have your bladder the same size for each treatment. By having a relatively full bladder for the treatment it means the bowel is pushed away from the prostate, which can help reduce any possible side effects.

For your planning scans and for your treatment we will ask you to empty your bladder, drink two cups of water (about 200ml) and then wait 30 minutes. This means that your bladder will be the same size each time.

When faeces or gas pass through your rectum they cause your prostate to change its shape and position. To try to minimise this happening during your treatment we will ask you to have an enema for two days before your planning scans, and on the morning of your scans. We will also ask you to have an enema two days before the start of your treatment and on each day that you have treatment.

If you have any diarrhoea during your treatment stop using the enemas and talk to the radiographers treating you.

Second planning appointment

Your second planning appointment will be at least a week after the markers have been inserted. At this appointment, you will have a CT scan and an MRI scan which will be used for planning your treatment.

You will be asked to empty your bladder, drink two cups of water (about 200ml) and then wait 30 minutes. You will then be asked to lie in the same position as the one to be used for your treatment. You will have some special support cushions which will help you stay in the correct position and make you more comfortable.

This position should be comfortable as you will need to keep still for between 30-60 minutes.

For this reason it is important for you to say if your treatment position is not totally comfortable. You will receive a phone call with your appointment dates and times.

What are the possible side-effects from having CyberKnife treatment to the prostate?

- Urinary frequency
Cystitis is inflammation of the bladder. It can be caused by a reaction to your treatment or by an infection. You may find that you need to urinate more often, or have pain or burning when you urinate. If you have any of these symptoms please speak to one of the team treating you. They will test your urine and refer you to a doctor if necessary.
To help prevent cystitis, try to drink at least two litres of fluid each day.
- Bowel frequency
It is possible that the treatment will increase the number of times that you open your bowels each day.

However, if you are passing loose stools more than four times each day then please speak to

the radiographers treating you and they can refer you to your oncologist or the clinic radiographer. Your oncologist or clinic radiographer can prescribe some medication while you have symptoms. Please ask the radiographers before taking Imodium or any other over the counter medications for diarrhoea.

We recommend that during this time you:

- have plenty of light snacks rather than large meals
- drink at least two litres of liquid each day to replace lost fluids
- avoid highly spiced and fatty foods
- stop taking laxatives (unless advised otherwise)

If you find you are becoming uncomfortable from not opening your bowels enough or are constipated, please let the clinic radiographers know so that they can prescribe some medication to help.

Please read about the general side-effects from having CyberKnife treatment on page 10 of the CyberKnife® booklet (PI72)

Other help and support

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.

If you would like further information about any aspect of cancer and its treatments, including the supportive services offered at the LJMC, please drop in to the centre or call the Helpline.

The staff at the LJMC work as part of the overall team caring for you and include healthcare professionals and trained volunteers. The centre provides a relaxed setting in which to talk and ask questions.

The LJMC is situated between the main Cancer Centre building and Gate 3 (White Hill).

 **Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre**
... supporting people affected by cancer...

Services offered at the LJMC include:

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

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

Mon-Fri: **9.30am–4.30pm**

Telephone Helpline: **020 3826 2555**

Website: **www.ljmc.org**