Radiotherapy Department

Radical radiotherapy for gynaecological cancer
Preparation for planning and treatment
Please read this instruction leaflet before you come for your planning appointments. It will help you to prepare and understand the process.

**Radiotherapy treatment planning**

You will need to have bowel and bladder preparation as part of the treatment planning process. This will involve drinking water to fill your bladder and using an enema to empty your bowels.

The aim of the preparation process is to move your rectum, bladder and small bowel away from the treatment area, helping to reduce the risk of side effects and damage to these organs. It also helps to make sure that on the treatment days your internal organs are in the same position as on your radiotherapy planning scan. This is done so that the X-ray beams are directed at the defined target during each treatment. Previous pelvic surgery will affect how your other organs are moved when you fill your bladder.
Position of organs in pelvis with uterus

Position of organs in pelvis without uterus (after hysterectomy)
Bowel preparation

You will need to be opening your bowels on a daily basis. If necessary you will be prescribed laxatives to help you achieve this.

The radiographers will give you a micro enema to use, which will ensure that you have an empty rectum for the radiotherapy planning and treatment. The micro enema is a liquid medication contained in a small tube.

Although the prospect of using a micro-enema each day may sound unpleasant, research has shown that the use of an enema is beneficial and shouldn’t cause you any harm.

Bladder preparation

For a week before your appointment, increase your fluid intake so that you are well hydrated.

You will need a full bladder for your each of your radiotherapy planning and treatment appointments. You will be asked to drink a specific amount of water before each appointment.
How to use the micro enema

1. Please go to the toilet with the tube of micro enema and remove the cap. To make it easier to insert the nozzle into your rectum, spread some lubricating gel over the end of the nozzle.

2. Gently insert the nozzle fully into your rectum. Squeeze out all the contents and keep squeezing the tube as you remove the nozzle. (This action prevents the medication from being drawn back into the nozzle.)

3. It is OK to empty your bladder at this time if needed.

4. When you feel ready you can return to the waiting room. You can go to the toilet to empty your bowel and bladder whenever you feel you need to.

5. If after approximately 15 minutes you have not had the urge to empty your bowels, please try to do so and then continue with the instructions as below.

6. When you return to the waiting room, inform the receptionist that you have just emptied your bladder and bowels. Drink 2-4 cups of water in quick succession; your scan will take place approximately 30 minutes later.

   If you feel a desperate urge to empty your bladder during the 30 minute wait, please inform the receptionist.

Please note:
In the event that your rectum is already empty, the micro enema may have no effect and you might only pass wind. If this is the case – please do not be concerned.
Radiotherapy treatment

You will need to repeat this preparation process before each of your radiotherapy treatments.

When you arrive in the radiotherapy department, use your micro-enema and, once it has been effective, check in at reception. Please drink 2-4 cups of water in quick succession; your radiotherapy treatment will be given approximately 30 minutes after checking in.

You will be issued with a supply of micro enemas and a tube of lubricating gel to use during your treatment. Bring one micro enema with you each day. If you forget to bring one with you we can give you a replacement.

Please ask the radiographers looking after you if you need any further information.
Contact details

**Normal working hours**
Pre-Treatment radiographers 01865 235 544/5
Radiotherapy Reception 01865 235 465
If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk

Authors: Loryn Caulfield, Claire Shortis
November 2015
Review: November 2018
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

OMI 12765P