

Radiotherapy to the prostate or prostate bed – preparation for planning and treatment

Information for Patients



The Radiotherapy Department

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

Radiotherapy treatment planning

This leaflet will help you understand the need for preparing your bladder and bowels before attending for your planning appointment as well as all of your treatment appointments

You will need to have bowel and bladder preparation as part of the treatment process. This will involve drinking water to fill your bladder and using an enema to empty your bowels. If you are worried that you will have problems with the preparation process, please discuss your concerns with your therapeutic radiographer.

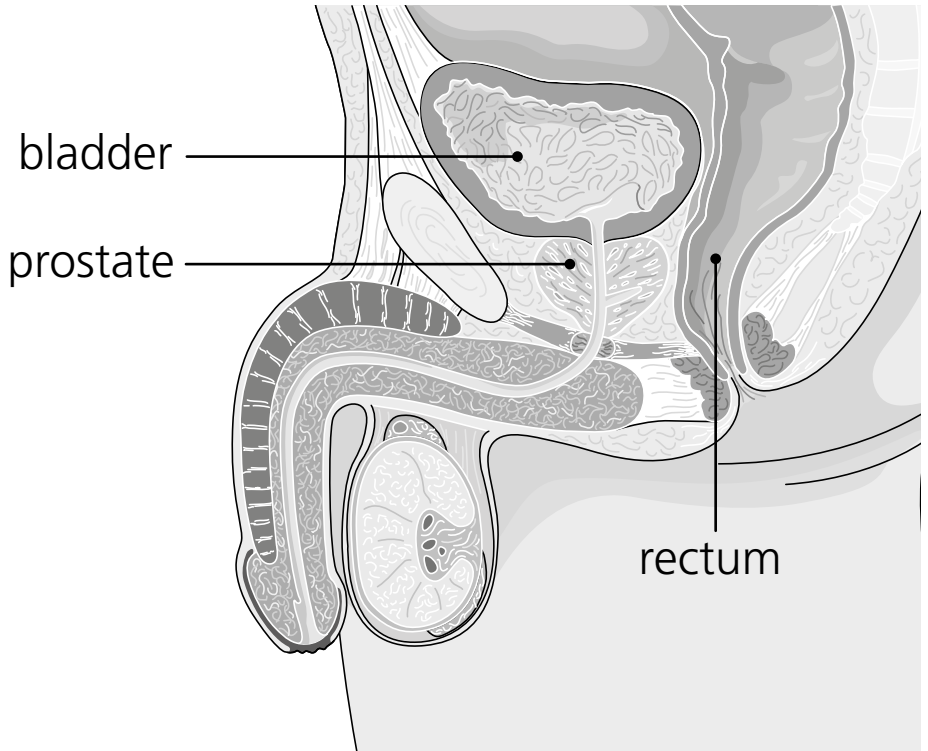
The aim of the preparation process is to move your rectum, bladder and bowel away from your prostate or prostate bed, helping to reduce the risk of side effects and damage to these organs. It also helps to make sure that on the treatment days your prostate or prostate bed is in the same position as on your radiotherapy planning scan.

To ensure that your bladder is full and in the correct position for radiotherapy it is important that you are well hydrated for your planning and treatment. Please increase your fluid intake during the week before your planning appointment. You should drink between 1.5 and 2 litres of water based fluid per day.

If you have been given a prescription for your micro enemas, please collect them from your hospital pharmacy before your planning appointment at the Churchill hospital. If you have not been given a prescription, one will be waiting for you at radiotherapy reception on the day of your appointment. Please remember to bring one micro enema with you to every radiotherapy appointment.

As part of the planning process you will also need to have a CT (computerised tomography) scan.

Diagram to show the position of the prostate (or prostate bed)

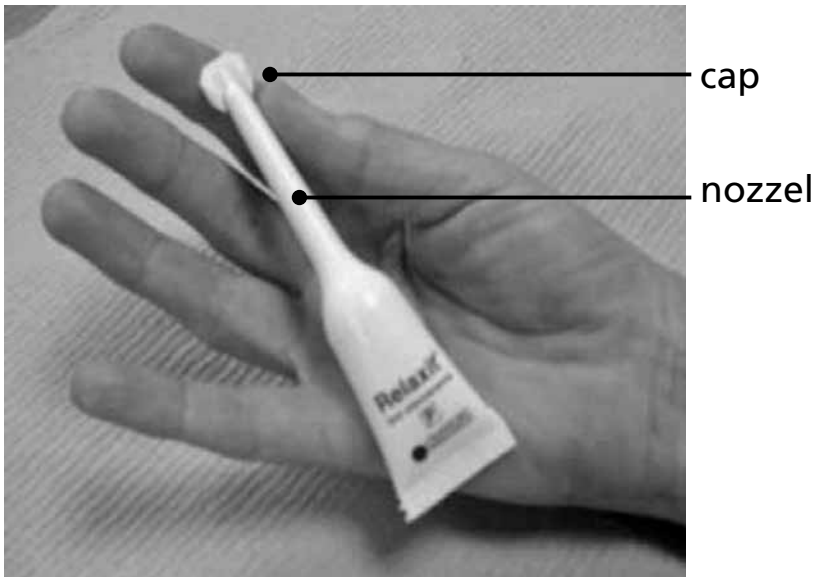


Bladder preparation

To prepare your bladder you will be asked to drink two cups of water when you arrive in the department, before following the information below.

Bowel preparation – use of a micro enema

The micro enema tube



At your planning CT appointment, the radiographers will give you a tube of lubricating gel to use with the micro enema. The micro enema comes in a small tube (5mls/one teaspoon in volume) with a nozzle (see picture). The medication is inserted into your rectum through the nozzle. You will be asked to do this for yourself. You will be asked to do this for yourself when you are in the radiotherapy department and not at home.

This causes your bowel to empty with a bowel movement or passing of wind. **If you have already opened your bowels on the day of the scan, you will still need to use the micro enema, to make sure that your bowel is empty.**

The need to have a bowel movement is usually felt within 10-15 minutes, with most people needing to visit the toilet only once. However, before your scan, please empty your bowel as often as you feel the need to.

The toilets are close to the reception and planning areas.

How to use the micro enema

Please wash your hands with soap and water before and after using the enema.

1. After you arrive in the radiotherapy department, go to the toilet with the enema and remove the cap. To make it easier to insert the nozzle into your rectum, spread some lubricating gel over the nozzle.
2. Gently insert the nozzle as far as is comfortable to do so 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.) You may find it easiest to sit on the toilet to insert the enema. When finished, please throw the enema into the yellow bin. Do not dispose of it into the toilet.
3. It is OK to empty your bladder at this time if needed. Please wash your hands thoroughly.
4. Return to the waiting room. Go to the toilet to empty your bowel and bladder whenever you feel you need to. When you empty your bladder you should do so using the normal amount of force and time. Do not strain to empty every last drop of fluid from your bladder.
5. If, after approximately 15 minutes, you have not had the urge to empty your bowel, please try to do so, even if you only empty your bladder.

Please note:

6. In the event that your rectum is already empty, the micro enema will have no effect. If this is the case, please do not be concerned and just let the radiographer know.

7. When you return to the waiting room, tell the receptionist that you have just emptied your bladder and bowels. Your scan will take place approximately 30 minutes later.
8. During the 30 minute wait please quickly drink a further 2-4 cups of water.
9. A radiographer will take you into a clinic room to conduct an ultrasound scan of your bladder. This ultrasound is used to see how full your bladder is prior to the CT planning scan. Sometimes we have to ask you to drink more water to ensure your bladder is full enough for the scan.
10. You will be taken into the CT scanning room and asked to lie on the scanner table. Occasionally the scan can show too much bowel gas (wind) and we might ask you to have a short walk to help move the gas through the bowel.

If you feel a desperate urge to empty your bladder during the 30 minute wait, please tell the receptionist. They will let a member of the pre-treatment team know, so they can come and speak with you.

Preparation for treatment

You will need to repeat the preparation process before each of your radiotherapy treatments. Bring one micro enema with you each day.

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.

When you arrive in the radiotherapy department, use your micro enema and, once it has been effective, check in at reception. Please also drink another 2-4 cups of water in quick succession and wait for 30 minutes for your treatment.

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

Please speak to the radiographers looking after you if you need any further information.

A short video describing this process and radiotherapy treatment is now available at: **www.ouh.nhs.uk** – search '**prostate radiotherapy film**'

How to contact us

Radiotherapy Scheduling

Tel: **01865 572 315**

Radiotherapy Reception

Tel: **01865 235 465**

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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