



# Patient Fact-sheet (General)

**Radiotherapy** is a treatment for cancer that uses radiation beam to kill cancer cells. It may be given alone as the main treatment, in combination with surgery or chemotherapy to increase success rate of surgical removal of tumor and decrease rate of cancer recurrence or as palliative treatment. Re-irradiation may also be given in some cases.

Radiotherapy may also be used for benign tumors, keloid scars and some blood diseases. The treatment scheme of radiotherapy depends on the type of cancer, patient's condition, the overall treatment plan and the site of radiotherapy. Your attending physician will assess you before treatment and discuss with you the benefits, risks and other treatment options.

## Treatment

### Procedure of Radiotherapy

Planning Room /  
Mould Room

Computed  
Tomography

Linear  
Accelerator 1/2

Radiotherapy is given in the St. Teresa's Hospital Oncology Centre. Patients will not experience any pain or feelings during treatment. Radiation therapists will ensure accurate positioning and then patients will stay in the treatment room alone for a couple of minutes. Patients will be closely monitored through closed-circuit television or windows and they may communicate or express any discomfort with the radiation therapists through an intercom or slight instructed movements if needed.

## Side Effects

The following side effects may occur. The likelihood depends on the area and its condition before treatment, radiation dose and whether radiotherapy is combined with other treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy etc.

### Short-term Side Effects

The following side effects may occur during treatment and resolve gradually after treatment is completed:

- Nausea, tiredness, loss of appetite
- Skin redness, soreness or hair loss in the treated area

### Long-term Side Effects

The following side effects may occur months to years after treatment and may persist:

- Pigmentation and firmness (fibrosis) of the skin treated
- Fibrosis, soreness, stricture or fistula at the skin, wound or scar treated; swelling due to lymphoedema (uncommon)
- Other long-term side effects
- Secondary cancer (very rare)

Severe side effects are rare. The likelihood of developing side effects depends on the extent and dose of radiotherapy, patient factors and other concurrent treatments. In general, the risks may increase if repeated radiotherapy (re-irradiation) is given to the same site. Patient's attending physician will give him/her the most suitable treatment to minimize risk of side effects.



## Before Each Treatment

1. The details of treatment depend on the type and site of cancer and patients' condition. The doctor will explain to patient about the treatment plan, side effects and after-care.
2. Personalized immobilization devices may be made for patients for treatment positioning to ensure accuracy and minimize radiation to surrounding organs and tissue.
3. Radiation therapists will set up patients to undergo computed tomography for localization of the treatment area and treatment planning.
4. Radiation therapists may draw skin marks, patients should keep the skin marks properly.
5. Please inform our staff before planning procedures if the following situation(s) appear:
  - Pregnancy / Last menstrual period / Metallic intrauterine device
  - Claustrophobia
  - Allergy history of medicine / tattoo
  - Electronic Medical Devices: Permanent pacemaker / Implantable cardioverter-defibrillator / Implantable neural stimulator / Metallic transplant plate / Metallic fixation
  - Denture / Hearing aid

**Please Note: Female patients of childbearing age should take contraception measures during the period of radiotherapy.**

## After-care

- ⊕ Patient may feel tired or unwell after treatment. Patient may ask his/her family or friends to accompany patient's for visiting the hospital and prepare clothing for keeping warm.
- ⊕ During the period of radiotherapy,, medical consultations will be arranged for progress assessment and management of any side effects.
- ⊕ Please inform radiation therapists to arrange medical consultations if patients feel unwell.

## Treatment is Completed

The doctor will arrange appointment for the patient to follow up the treatment side effects. Please attend the follow-up appointments as scheduled and discuss with the doctor if the patient has any inquiries.

## Remarks

1. The above items are for reference only.
2. Depending on the patient's condition, treatment area and the complexity of the treatment, each treatment plan is tailor made for patients for their interests..
3. Please discuss with the radiation therapists if the patient has any special request.
4. In order to reduce the waiting time for all patients, radiation therapists will take into account patient's condition and length of treatment to arrange suitable radiation treatment time for each patient.

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