

Contacts

If you are unable to keep any appointments, or have any questions concerning your appointments, please telephone the Wellington Blood & Cancer Centre as soon as possible.

Radiation Treatment Department
Level 2
Wellington Blood & Cancer Centre
Wellington Regional Hospital
Private Bag 7902
Riddiford St
Newtown

Telephone: 04 806 2000

Monday - Friday: 8am – 4:30pm

5 North Ward oncology nurses are available for **urgent after hours advice** related to your treatment. This is after 4:30pm and on weekends. **Please call: 04 806 0418**

Advice for Patients Receiving Radiation Treatment to the Prostate or Prostate bed

Radiation Treatment Department

Wellington Blood and Cancer Centre

Tiredness

Some people experience tiredness towards the end of their treatment. This can be caused by a number of factors - travelling to and from treatment each day, change in routine, and the radiation treatment itself. You may require extra rest or some time off work.

Smoking

We strongly advise you to stop smoking as this can worsen the side effects of treatment. You may find this very difficult. Please speak to your treatment team about support available to help with this.

After Treatment

Reactions usually peak about 2 weeks after treatment. Most people find that side effects begin to ease about 2 - 4 weeks after treatment. Continue with the advice in this brochure until the reactions have subsided.

Support Services

Please ask a member of your treatment team if you would like more information or to access any of these services.

- Cancer Society/ Support groups
- Counselling (general / relationship / sexual issues)
- Social work
- Massage
- Fit for Life
- Chaplains

Introduction

This booklet is to inform you and those close to you about caring for yourself during treatment. Patients receiving radiation treatment to the prostate or prostate bed may notice some changes to their bladder and bowel function, as well as tiredness. These reactions build up slowly over the course of treatment. Your treatment team will help you manage these side effects, and it is important to note that patients may react differently. Do not hesitate to ask questions of your treatment team if you have any concerns or are experiencing problems.

We believe you should know what to look for, and how to encourage the healing process in your body. You may want to show this booklet to your support person so they also have an understanding of your treatment.

It is sometimes a good idea to write down any problems or questions you might have over this time. You can then discuss these with your doctor or treatment team next time you see them.

Urinary Symptoms

Changes within your bladder while having treatment to the prostate or prostate bed are common. Reactions may include:

- Urinating more often (this may be more noticeable during the night)
- Difficulty urinating or a change in flow
- Stinging or burning while urinating

If you have these symptoms, there are ways you can help.

- Drink plenty of fluids such as water during the day and limit your drinks in the evening
- Drink cranberry juice as this may help relieve the symptoms

Please inform your treatment team if you are experiencing any of these side effects as there may be other ways of managing them.

Changes to Bowel Habits

During treatment, you may notice some changes to your normal bowel habits. Your bowel motions could become more frequent and softer (diarrhoea) or they could become less frequent, firmer and uncomfortable (constipation). Often, this can be managed with small changes to your diet or providing you with medication. It is also important to keep drinking plenty of fluids. Please talk to your treatment team if you are noticing some changes.

Sexual Health & Emotions

Treatment can affect people differently and you may notice a change in your mood, emotions and sex life. Radiation therapy or other treatments and medications you are taking may make it difficult to get an erection. You may also become less interested in having sex during treatment or for sometime afterwards. There are treatments and support services available so please speak with your doctor or a member of the team if you would like further information.

Some patients feel nervous about having sex during treatment. It is important to understand it is perfectly safe to do so. Cancer cannot be passed to your partner. You may also be concerned about the radiation therapy affecting your partner but radiation does not stay in the body so you will not harm them.

If you are having sex during and after your treatment, it is important to use contraception. Your doctor may advise you not to father a child during treatment and for up to six months after it is finished. You can ask your doctors for information about this.