

## Kent Oncology Centre

# External Beam Radiotherapy for Prostate Cancer: Preparing for your CT scan and treatment

### Information for patients

Your consultant has recommended that you receive a course of external beam radiotherapy to treat your prostate cancer. As with any course of treatment, side effects may occur. This leaflet has been produced to help you prepare for your radiotherapy treatments, so that these side effects can be kept to a minimum. If you would like to speak to one of the radiotherapy team please feel free to contact them on the numbers given below:

**Macmillan Urology Radiographers**       01622 225094  
 07703 971991

**Maidstone Hospital**  
Appointment enquiries       01622 225080

**Kent and Canterbury Hospital**  
Appointment enquiries       01227 783010

You will be given a copy of our leaflet 'Radiotherapy Side Effects and Management: Prostate Cancer' which we advise you to read alongside this leaflet. If you have not been given a copy please ask.

### Radiotherapy to the prostate

External beam radiotherapy treats cancer by using high-energy x-rays to destroy the cancer cells. Your treatment will be planned to deliver the maximum dose of radiotherapy to the prostate, while doing as little harm as possible to the healthy organs near the prostate.

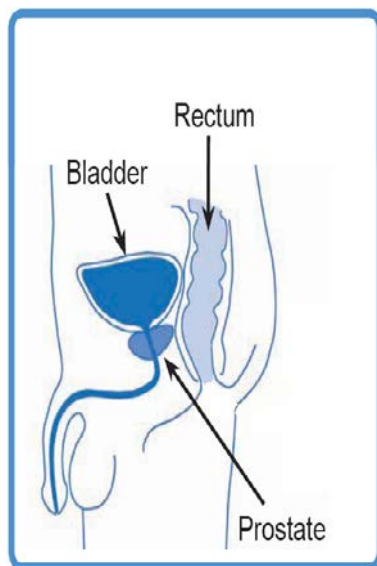
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The organs most commonly affected by radiotherapy to the prostate are the bladder and the rectum (back passage). It is damage to these organs that causes the majority of the side effects from the treatment.

### CT (planning) scan

Before your actual treatment starts you will visit the department for a 'planning CT scan'. This scan is performed to allow your consultant to define the precise area that is to be treated. The planning scan is not 'diagnostic'. You will not receive any results from this scan.



### Bowel preparation

It is important that, when you have your planning scan and your daily treatment, you open your bowels daily and that your stools are soft and smooth. This can help minimise the side effects that you might experience as the treatment proceeds. You may be prescribed micro-enemas to use prior to your scan and treatment appointments.

### Bladder preparation

It is also important that you have a comfortably full bladder for the scan and for each treatment. This can help reduce the side effects of the treatment. A comfortably full bladder helps to push the bowel away from the treatment area so that a smaller amount of the bladder and bowel are within the 'treatment field'.

You **must** ensure that you are **well hydrated** throughout the **whole of your course of treatment**, particularly when coming for your daily appointments. You should aim to be drinking **at least two litres of fluids** (water, squashes, juices, a little tea and coffee) **each day**.

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If you have morning appointments you may need to get up a little earlier to ensure that you have drunk a reasonable amount, and are passing urine, before you leave home.

**Please arrive at the department about 45 minutes to one hour before your CT scan appointment time, bringing with you a 500ml bottle of water.**

A radiographer will speak to you before your scan. You will be asked to empty your bladder and then drink your bottle of water, as quickly as you comfortably can.

If you are well hydrated, your bladder should start to fill quite quickly, and its volume will be checked by the staff before your CT scan using an ultrasound machine. If it is not quite full enough, you may be asked to wait a little longer before the scan can be performed

**You should follow the same procedure on each day of your treatment.** This will ensure that you have the same amount of liquid in your bladder each day. By doing this we aim to minimise the side effects you may suffer from your treatment.

**Please note:** If you have not had a reasonable amount to drink before you come to the department your bladder may be almost empty when scanned with the ultrasound machine. If this is the case it may be necessary to ask you return home and to come back another day for your CT scan.

If your rectum isn't sufficiently empty at the planning scan you may also be asked to come back another day. You may be given laxatives or micro-enemas if necessary.

**Please bring this leaflet with you when you attend for your CT planning scan.**

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## Following your CT scan today: .....

After your CT scan please follow the procedure below.

### **For each of your treatment appointments you must:**

Check in at reception and find out if your treatment machine is running on time.

Empty your bladder ..... minutes before your **treatment** time and then drink ..... ml of water.

If you feel that you need to empty your bladder before you have been called for your treatment, please speak to the treatment staff before going to the toilet.

..... (Planning Radiographer)

**MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.**

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

**Telephone:** ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

**Email:** [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk) or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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