

What happens after finishing gynaecological radiotherapy?

This information leaflet explains what to expect after you have completed your radiotherapy treatment.

Acute / short-term side effects of treatment

Side effects of radiotherapy treatment may continue to get worse after completion of treatment, peaking approximately 10 days after radiotherapy. After two weeks, the side effects should slowly start to settle down.

Please remember to continue with all advice regarding skin care and diet during the two weeks after treatment. When returning to a normal diet or skin care regime remember to re-introduce things slowly to enable you to determine which item, if any, may cause irritation.

If you have any concerns during this time please contact your review radiographer on the telephone number at the end of this leaflet.

Follow-up

Your first follow-up will be 4-6 weeks after completion of your radiotherapy. This may seem like a long period of time but because radiotherapy continues to work in the body after finishing radiotherapy, sufficient time must be allowed to ensure side effects have settled.

If you have not received an appointment within three weeks please contact the Berkshire Cancer Centre Clinic on the telephone number at the end of this leaflet.

Follow-up thereafter is 3-4 monthly in years one and two, and 6-monthly in years three to five. For patients receiving endometrial radiotherapy patient initiated follow up may be advised by your doctor.

Please note: no patients will be required to have a scan before their 4-6 week follow-up. Those who require a scan will be informed by their doctor during the first follow-up appointment.

Late / long-term side effects

Late / long-term side effects are those that do not go away, or that develop months or even years after completing radiotherapy. You can find a copy of 'Managing the late effects of pelvic radiotherapy in women' on the Macmillan website at

https://be.macmillan.org.uk/Downloads/CancerInformation/TestsAndTreatments/MAC13826_Late_Effects_Pelvic_Radiotherapy_in_Women.pdf

It can be worrying to read about the late / long-term effects of radiotherapy but it is important to remember not everyone will suffer from late effects and for those that do, most can be treated successfully. The Macmillan late effects online booklet has many hints and tips to help you after you have finished your radiotherapy in addition to many contact numbers should you have any further questions or concerns.

If you do suffer from any late / long-term side effects, it is important to discuss these with your radiotherapy doctor. Depending on the late effects that you get and how much they are affecting you, it may be necessary to refer you to a specialist in that area.

If you are experiencing incontinence or urgency when needing the toilet, please inform your review radiographer prior to finishing your radiotherapy. They will be able to provide you with a 'toilet card' for you to carry with you when you are out and about. This can be used to help you access toilets more quickly without the need to explain why.

Contact information

Dr O'Donnells Secretary 0118 322 6911

Dr Wain's Secretary 0118 322 7871

Berkshire Cancer Centre Clinic 0118 322 7890

Lisa Clarke (Clinical Nurse Specialist) 0118 322 8195

Lisa Revans (Review Radiographer) 0118 322 8869

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Lisa Revans, Berkshire Cancer Centre, August 2023

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