

Radiotherapy for skin lymphomas

This information booklet is about radiotherapy for skin lymphomas, including cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (which includes Sezary syndrome & mycosis Fungoides).

If you have any questions, or would like more advice, please ask a member of your treatment team. The team consists of radiographers, doctors and nurses who will help and support you throughout your treatment.

Contact phone numbers can be found on the pages 3 and 4 of this leaflet.

Radiotherapy

Radiotherapy uses radiation (high energy x-rays or similar rays) to treat cancer. It damages your body's cells within the treatment area, killing the cancer cells but allowing your normal cells to recover. Its side effects are generally isolated to the area you are having treated.

Treatment

You will see a specialist cancer doctor (an oncologist). This appointment will be at the Cancer Centre at Guy's.

Your doctor will prescribe the amount of radiation needed for your treatment. This amount may be given in one treatment or divided up into smaller doses (called fractions) that are given over a period of days or weeks.

Your doctor will discuss with you your course of radiotherapy and any possible side effects. You will be asked to sign a consent form. This is to confirm that you agree to have the radiotherapy treatment.

If you have any further questions please ask the radiographers, when they ask you to verbally confirm that you wish to have radiotherapy.

Marking the treatment area

This takes place in the Cancer Centre at Guy's, Level R2.

You will need to lie on the treatment couch. A doctor will use a bright light and a magnifying glass to look at the area of your skin to be treated. Marks will be put onto your skin with a felt pen to outline the area(s) of treatment.

The radiographer will record the treatment area by taking measurements and, with your consent, a photograph.

During treatment

We may need to protect an area around the treatment site with a thin piece of sheet lead. This will be placed on your skin.

Part of the radiotherapy machine will rest on your skin during treatment. You may feel a small amount of pressure on your skin because of this. The treatment is painless and you will not feel a thing.

The radiographer will leave the room while the treatment is being given but will watch you on closed circuit television. If you need help, wave your hand. The radiographer can stop the treatment and return to the room to assist you.

Treatment can last between two and eight minutes.

During treatment it is important that you keep still.

When your treatment ends, the radiographer will remove the skin marks. You will be given details of further appointments if required and advice on how to look after your skin.

Follow-up appointment

You will have a follow-up appointment with the doctor who originally referred you for radiotherapy. If you do not know when this is, please ask the radiographer on your last day of treatment.

Side effects during radiotherapy

Only skin in the treatment area will experience side effects. As treatment progresses this area may become red, itchy and sore. The skin reaction will become worse as the treatment progresses. This will continue for about seven to ten days after treatment is complete and then any side effects will gradually settle.

If you have any hair growing in the area it may fall out. It may start to grow back a few months after treatment.

Skin care

The staff will advise you how to look after your skin during treatment.

You do not need any special skin care following treatment. You may wash using your usual soap and moisturiser—many of you will already have been prescribed this by your dermatology team.

Coping with the diagnosis

This can be a worrying time. Changes in your appearance may be distressing to you and to those close to you.

Talking about your concerns can help you to find ways of coping. Staff caring for you can help you to find answers to questions or worries that you may have. They can also help you find out about other sources of information and support.

Dimbleby Cancer Care is for patients and carers attending the Cancer Centre at Guy's, and King's College Hospital. It provides information, psychological support and complementary therapy for people affected by cancer.

Support group

There is a support group held in the centre for people with skin lymphoma. It is held every second Monday of the month at Dimbleby Cancer Care, in the Welcome Village of the Cancer Centre at Guy's. You can contact them for more information on 020 7188 5918.

Psychological support

There is a clinical psychologist especially for those affected by skin lymphoma. Her aim is to help you live better with the diagnosis and to reduce distress. If you would like to talk to the clinical psychologist, you can ask your doctor or clinical nurse specialist to refer you, or you can call 020 7188 7188 ext 51874.

Contact us

If you need to talk to someone while you are on treatment, please call the radiotherapy reception on 020 7188 7188 (enter extension 57542 or 57569), Monday–Friday, 9am to 5pm.

If you have a problem in the evening or on a weekend, please contact the main switchboard on 020 7188 7188 and ask for 'operator' or press 0. Then ask for the clinical oncology registrar on call.

Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals offer a range of cancer-related information leaflets for patients and carers, available at www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/cancer-leaflets. For information leaflets on other conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets



Dimbleby Cancer Care provides cancer support services for Guy's and St Thomas'. We have a drop-in information area staffed by specialist nurses and offer complementary therapies, psychological support and benefits advice for patients and carers.

Dimbleby Cancer Care is located in the Welcome Village of the Cancer Centre at Guy's. **t:** 020 7188 5918 **e:** DimblebyCancerCare@gstt.nhs.uk

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the clinical nurse specialist or other member of staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

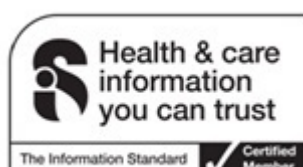
t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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