



Total skin electronic beam therapy (TSEBT)

This information booklet is about electron beam therapy to your skin.

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 page 6 of this booklet.

What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy is the use of radiation (high-energy x-rays or similar rays) to kill cancer cells. Total skin electron beam therapy (TSEBT) is radiotherapy delivered to the entire skin surface. It is given by machines producing beams of high-energy electrons. An electron beam will only treat the skin surface. TSEBT is used when the cancer has affected many areas of your skin, which cannot be treated with a single field of radiation.

Planning your treatment

Your doctor will ask you to sign a consent form. This is to confirm that you agree to have radiotherapy treatment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. Your treatment will then be planned according to your needs. You will be shown how to place yourself in the six treatment positions (see diagrams on the next page).

We will measure your waist and take an impression of your shape. This is to enable us to position you accurately for treatment.

Treatment

Treatment will start 1–2 weeks after the planning appointment. Treatment is given on four consecutive days: Tuesday to Friday or Monday to Thursday for either five weeks or two weeks depending on the regimen chosen. Your doctor will discuss the most appropriate length of treatment with you in clinic.

The total treatment each day will last for 30–45 minutes. You will need to travel to the Cancer Centre at Guy's daily or you may be able to stay in the Simon Patient Hotel. This is accommodation for self-caring patients, based within the hospital grounds. There is no charge for NHS patients (see page 6 for contact details).

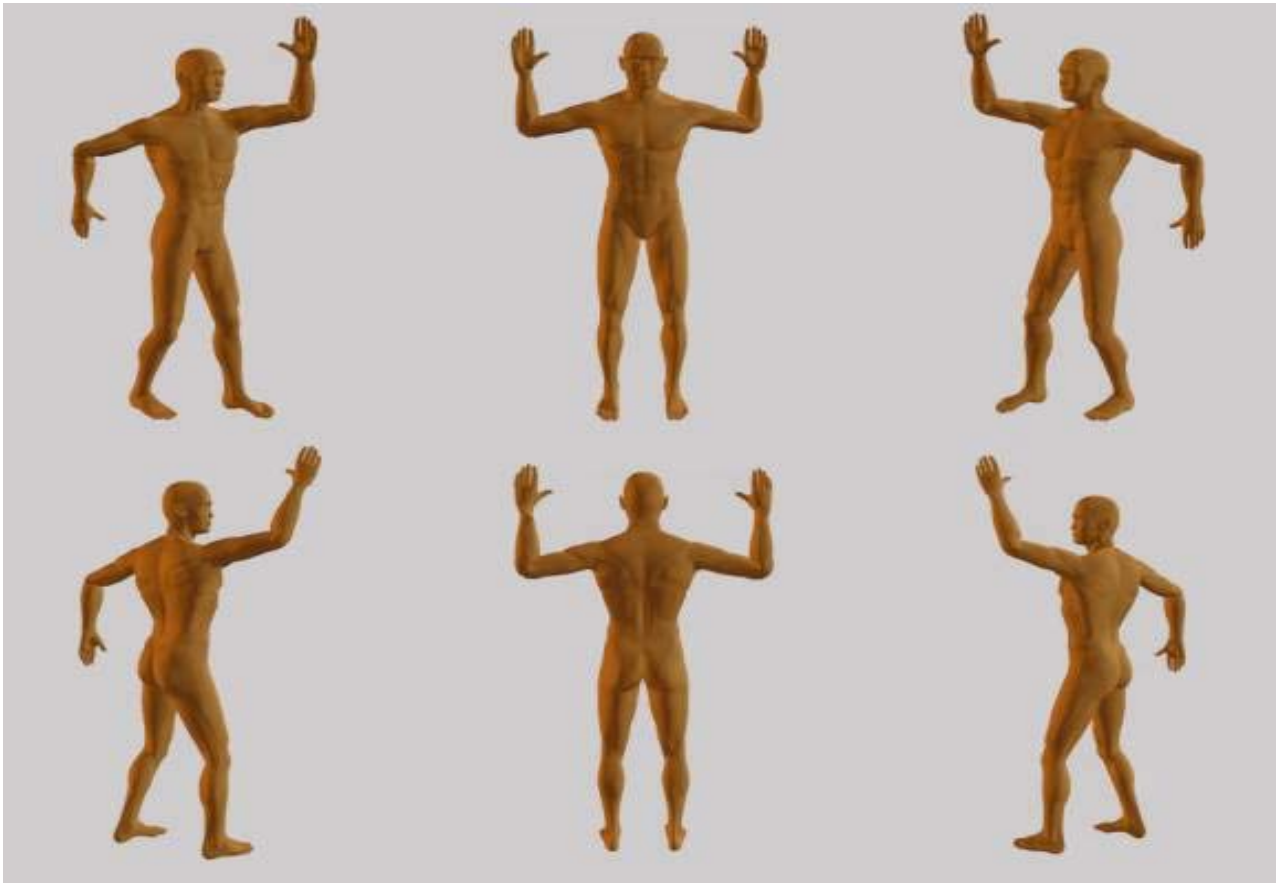
How do I prepare for treatment?

You will be given special net underwear to wear for the treatment. Please bring a bathrobe and slippers to wear between the changing room and treatment room.

What happens during the treatment?

You will need to stand for the treatment, holding a bar within the treatment frame. The radiographers will position you for the treatment in the positions shown below. You will need to hold each position for a few minutes then change to the next.

The six treatment positions



Reprinted with permission from Smith BD, Wilson LD: Management of Mycosis fungoides. Part 2. Treatment. Oncology 17: 1419-1428

You will have to wear goggles over your eyes for every treatment. The goggles protect your eyes from the radiotherapy. They are heavy and dark. This means that you will not be able to see anything while you are wearing them.

Special shielding may be used for your nails, hands, legs and feet. For the first treatment we will place 25 small packets of crystals at various points all over your skin. These monitor the dose of radiation that you receive.

During the last two weeks of your TSEBT you may have boost treatments to some areas, for example, scalp, eyes, perineum (the area under your bottom).

During treatment you will be in the treatment room on your own, but the radiographers will be watching you via a monitor and can hear you via an intercom. When the machine is switched on you will hear a beeping sound, but you will not feel anything from the treatment. After the treatment you will be able to return home or to the patient hotel.

Care during treatment

You will have a weekly check-up with the radiotherapy doctor who will monitor your treatment closely. You will have a blood test at the start of treatment and this will be repeated in weeks three and five (if you are having a five week course of treatment).

The nurses in the clinic can advise you on skin care or any other problems that you may have.

Possible side effects

Itchy skin

To help reduce any discomfort:

- keep your skin moisturised
- wear cotton clothes; avoid wool and synthetic fabrics
- your doctor may prescribe anti-histamine medicine to relieve the itching; this may make you drowsy.

Fissures (cracks in your skin)

- apply prescribed medication or dressings.

Sun sensitivity

Your skin will be more sensitive to sunlight and will need to take precautions, for example:

- wear a hat and long sleeves when you go out into sunshine
- after your course of treatment you will need to wear a sunscreen lotion that screens for UVA and UVB
- wear sunglasses that screen for UVA and UVB.

Skin care

- bathe daily in warm water with a soap substitute (as prescribed) or bath oil for dry skin
- apply moisturiser after your bath while your skin is still moist
- re-apply moisturiser regularly during the day
- do not wet shave or use hair removal creams or wax
- do not go swimming as the chemicals in the pool can dry your skin
- do not use a sauna or a Turkish bath during treatment as this can encourage a skin reaction.

Skin infections

- keep skin clean and well moisturised
- apply prescribed antibiotic ointment to any lesions
- if you are worried about any areas of your skin please tell the staff caring for you.

Fatigue

You may feel very tired towards the end of your treatment. **There are a number of reasons why patients develop tiredness during treatment with radiation therapy:**

- the biological effect of radiation
- travelling for treatment each day
- lack of sleep
- itchy skin or other symptoms
- feeling anxious or depressed.

The tiredness will gradually resolve, but it may last for several months. Below are some suggestions to help you manage tiredness:

- plan rest periods into your daily routine
- take a walk or do something that you enjoy
- if you are working, you may wish to work reduced hours
- ask friends and family to help you with everyday activities
- eat a normal healthy diet.

Temperature regulation

Sweating is your body's natural way of controlling its temperature. After TSEBT your sweat glands may not work properly for a few months and you may sweat less than before. Avoid strenuous exercise in hot humid weather and drink plenty of fluids. In cooler weather wear layers of clothes to keep you warm if you feel chilly.

Swelling

- towards the end of your treatment your ankles and feet may swell
- you may get blisters on your feet. Wearing soft shoes and slippers may help to prevent them.

Brittle nails

- your nails may be shielded during treatment
- they may become brittle and split. Keep nails trimmed
- nails may fall out, but if they do they will re-grow a few months after treatment has finished
- wear thin cotton gloves to protect your nails and to prevent scratching your skin or snagging your clothes.

Hair loss (alopecia)

- you may lose the hair on your head and body but it will normally grow back three to six months after treatment has finished.

Other side effects

You may experience:

- changes in taste
- a dry mouth
- nose bleeds
- dry eyes
- stiffness in your hands and feet.

If you experience any of these side effects, please let your doctor or the radiographers know.

Radioactivity

With TSEBT you will not be radioactive, so there is no need to avoid close contact with other people. You can be sexually active during your treatment with radiotherapy, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

What happens after TSEBT?

Your doctor will give you information about your care after you have finished your course of TSEBT. You should follow the advice on looking after your skin (see page 3). You may need additional treatments to certain areas of your body. If this is the case, your doctor will discuss these with you further.

Coping with treatment

Many people feel unable to cope with what is happening to them and feel anxious or depressed. It can be helpful to know that most people find these feelings ease with time.

Discuss your concerns with any of the staff that are involved in your treatment, as well as your family and friends. You may find that you are asking yourself lots of questions. Talking to other people can help you to find the answers.

A member of the team can refer you to Dimbleby Cancer Care if you need more help – see below for more information.

Support group

There is a support group especially for patients with skin lymphoma and their carers. Call Dimbleby Cancer Care on 020 7188 5918 for more information.

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 contact:

Clinical psychologist
t: 020 7188 7188 ext 51874

Useful sources of information

Macmillan Cancer Support (freephone)

t: 0808 808 0000 w: www.macmillan.org.uk

Lymphoma Association

t: 0808 808 5555 w: www.lymphomas.org.uk

Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation

w: www.clfoundation.org e: info@clfoundation.org



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

Contact us

You can contact the radiotherapy reception on 020 7188 7188 (enter extension number 57542 or 57569). If you would like to speak to the skin cancer clinical nurse specialists or patient pathway coordinators, please call 020 7188 7188.

Superficial skin unit **t:** 020 7188 7188 (extension 57573)
Simon Patient Hotel **t:** 020 7188 0346

Out of hours

If you have a treatment related problem in the evenings or weekend call the main hospital switchboard on: 020 7188 7188 and ask for 'operator' or press 0. Then ask the operator 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

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.

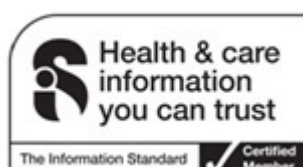
w: www.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 0602/VER4

Date published: November 2016

Review date: November 2019

© 2016 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust



Guy's and St Thomas' 
NHS Foundation Trust