

放射治療

本資訊是關於放射治療。

任何加下劃線的詞語都在結尾的詞語清單中作出解釋。

詞語清單還包括詞語的英語發音。

許多癌症患者的治療方案中都會包括化療。放射治療可以分為多種不同的類型。我們將在本資訊中講解一些主要的類型。

有些人還需要接受其他治療，如化療或手術。我們還有以繁體中文編寫有關這些治療方法的資訊。

如果您對這些資訊有任何疑問，請詢問您正在接受治療的醫院的醫生或護士。

您也可於每日上午 8 時至晚上 8 時，致電麥克米倫癌症援助機構（Macmillan Cancer Support）免費熱線：0808 808 00 00。我們有傳譯員，所以您可以使用您自己的母語與我們溝通。當您致電我們時，請以英文告訴我們您所需要的語言。

您可以在 macmillan.org.uk/translations 找到更多關於癌症的繁體中文資訊。

本資訊是關於：

- 甚麼是放射治療？
- 為甚麼要接受放射治療？
- 您的放射治療團隊
- 瞭解您的治療
- 在哪裡接受放射治療？
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- 放射治療的類型
- 放射治療的副作用
- 晚期和長期的副作用
- 麥克米倫（Macmillan）可以如何幫助您
- 詞語清單
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- 參考文獻與致謝

甚麼是放射治療？

放射治療使用稱為輻射的高能射線來治療癌症。這種射線會摧毀接受放射治療的部位
的癌細胞。但同時也會損害正常細胞，但正常細胞通常會在治療完成後復原。

為甚麼要接受放射治療？

許多癌症患者的治療方案中都會包括放射治療。接受放射治療是基於不同的原因。

為了治愈癌症

可以使用放射治療來嘗試治愈某些類型的癌症。可以單獨使用放射治療，也可以與其他癌症治療方法，如化療一起進行。可以在手術之前或之後進行放射治療。在手術前進行，放射治療可能會將腫瘤縮小。在手術後進行，放射治療可能有助消滅任何殘留的癌細胞。

幫助緩解癌症的症狀

如果無可能治愈癌症，您可以接受放射治療來幫助控制癌症的症狀。這稱為紓緩性放射治療。

您的放射治療團隊

臨床腫瘤顧問醫生

他們是用放射治療方法來治療癌症的醫生。他們幫助您規劃您的治療。您可能在治療之前、期間和之後與他們見面。您也可以在兩次預約覆診之間要求與他們見面。

放射治療師

放射治療師團隊幫助您規劃您的治療，並為您進行放射治療。他們也會就您可能有的任何副作用或憂慮為您提供建議。

臨床護理專家

許多癌症中心都有癌症專科護士。他們有時被稱為臨床護理專家 (CNS)。這些護士是您所患癌症類型的專家。您可以向他們提出您的任何顧慮和需要。他們可以在您的治療期間和之後為您提供支援和資訊。他們也可以幫助您應對任何副作用。

您的關鍵工作人員

如果您需要更多資訊或支援，您可以聯絡您的關鍵工作人員。在通常情況下，您的團隊中的一名放射治療師或專科護士是您的關鍵工作人員。如果您不確定誰是您的關鍵工作人員，請在您下次覆診時詢問。

瞭解您的治療

在您接受治療之前，您的醫生、護士或放射治療師會解釋：

- 您為什麼需相關治療
- 您接受治療的頻率
- 可能出現的副作用
- 您在接受治療後可能有的感受。

除非您瞭解您為何需要治療和您會有的感受，否則不會向您提供任何治療。在接受治療之前，您需要提供您接受治療的許可。這稱為同意書。這份同意書表明您同意接受治療並瞭解可能出現的副作用。

您最好有會講中文和英語的人士同行。有時醫院可以為您提供傳譯員。您通常需要預先要求安排提供傳譯員。所以如果您需要傳譯員，請在預約前告訴醫院。

在哪裡接受放射治療？

放射治療是在醫院進行的。您通常以日間病人的身份接受治療。即是，您不需要在醫院過夜，治療結束後您就可以回家。對於某些類型的放射治療，您可能需要在醫院住幾天。

如果您身體感到不適，或者同時接受化療，您可能需要作為住院病人繼續留醫。在這種情況下，您需要每天從病房前往放射治療科。如果您必須長途跋涉才能到達醫院接受放射治療，您可以作為住院病人接受治療。

規劃您的治療

在您開始治療之前，必須對您的治療進行規劃。放射治療是為每個人精心策劃的。這是為了確保治療能發揮最大的作用，並盡可能減少副作用。規劃您的治療可能需要 1 次以上的覆診。您的放射治療團隊會告訴您需要做甚麼事情。

掃描

在開始治療前，您需要進行一次或多次掃描。這有助您的團隊決定您需要多少放射治療。這也有助他們規劃放射治療的確切部位。

在掃描前，您可能需要換上醫院的長袍。治療團隊的人也可能會對您的靜脈注射染料。這有助從掃描中獲得一個清晰的圖像。

模具和面罩

您可能需要一個模具或放射治療面罩來進行治療。如果您需要，您的放射治療團隊將為您製造一個。模具或面罩有助您保持靜止和正確的姿勢。模具是為腿部、手臂或其他身體部位而製造的。面罩是針對頭部或頸部。

模具或面罩是由塑膠網製成。它與您的身體緊緊地貼住，但不會讓人感到不舒服。您只需要佩戴很短的時間。您會在以下情況戴著它：

- 規劃您的治療時
- 當您接受治療時。

當您戴上面罩時，您可以正常呼吸。

放射治療面罩



皮膚上的標記

放射治療團隊的人可能會在您的皮膚上留下細小、永久的標記。這些標記顯示了放射治療的確切位置。這些標記的製作方法與紋身相同。只有在您允許的情況下才會對您刻劃這些標記。如果您對這些標記感到擔心，或者在治療部位已有紋身，請告訴您的放射治療師。

生育能力

放射治療可能會影響您懷孕或令他人懷孕的能力。許多人會感到難以應對這個問題。如果您對此感到擔心，請在治療開始前諮詢您的醫生或護士。他們可以告訴您該怎麼做以及如何保護您的生育能力。與心理輔導員或宗教領袖交談也可能有幫助。

避孕

您的醫生會建議您在治療期間不要懷孕或令他人懷孕。這是因為放射治療可能會損害胎兒的發育。在接受放射治療期間和之後幾個月內，您必須採取避孕措施。如果您對此感到擔心，您可以與您的醫生或護士交談。

放射治療的類型

放射治療分為多種不同類型。

- **體外放射治療** - 使用一部放射治療機器在身體外進行治療。
- **體內放射治療** - 即是，將放射性材料放入您的身體。體內放射治療分為兩種類型：近距離放射治療和放射性同位素治療。

您接受哪一種放射治療取決於癌症在體內的位置和癌症的類型。有些癌症同時採用體外和體內放射治療。

您可以要求醫生解釋您接受的是哪種類型的治療，以便您能閱讀本資訊的正確部分。

體外放射線治療

這是指使用一部放射治療機器在身體外進行治療。您通常每天接受 1 次放射治療，然後在週末休息。有些醫院也在週末進行治療，但會讓您在一週內的其中一天休息。

您的治療次數將取決於您所患的癌症類型和腫瘤大小。

每天的治療只需幾分鐘，但是如果醫院很繁忙，您可能需要等候接受治療。在等候時做一些事情，例如閱讀或聽音樂對您是有幫助的。

在第一次治療前，放射治療團隊會向您解釋整個過程。他們可能會要求您換上醫院的長袍。對接受治療感到擔心是正常的。但當您認識您的放射治療團隊和治療過程後，您的心情通常會較為放鬆。

可能需要一些時間才能將您擺放在正確的治療位置。您需要非常安靜地躺著。放射治療師會調暗燈光。然後，他們會在治療過程中離開房間。接受放射治療不會感到疼痛，放射治療的機器通常不會接觸到您。

接受體外放射治療的人



放射治療師會在隔壁的房間觀察您，可以是透過一個窗口或螢幕。其他任何人都不能看到您。通常會有一個對講機，如果在治療過程中您有需要，您可以與他們交談。

機器可能在您身體周圍移動，從不同方向進行治療。治療結束後，放射治療師會回到房間，幫助您從機器上下來。

這種治療不會使您帶有輻射。治療後，您接觸其他人，包括兒童都是安全的。

近距離放射治療

近距離放射治療是一種在體內進行的放射治療。它主要用於治療前列腺癌、子宮頸癌和子宮中的癌症。您的醫療團隊會為您解釋您的治療計劃。您也可能在接受近距離放射治療之前或之後接受體外放射治療或其他治療，如化療、荷爾蒙治療或標靶治療。

近距離放射治療是將放射源放置在您體內的癌腫瘤附近來進行治療。您可能需要全身麻醉，在睡著時為您植入放射源。或者可能對您注射止痛劑。

您可能在當天接受治療後就可以回家，或者您可能需要住院留醫。這取決於您接受哪種類型的近距離放射治療。在醫院接受治療期間，當進行放射治療時，您可能會在治療室內獨處一段時間。這是為了保護其他人免受治療的影響。如果您對此感到擔心，請告訴您的團隊，以便他們能夠提供幫助。他們會解釋您的治療將需要多長時間。

當從您體內取出放射源後，對您周圍的人就不會構成任何風險。您不會帶有輻射。

對於某些類型的近距離放射治療，不會移除放射源。您與大多數人相處是安全的。您的團隊可能要求您避免與兒童或懷孕的人有密切接觸。他們會告訴您需要這樣做多長時間。

您的團隊會向您提供關於您的治療的資訊，您須隨身攜帶。

放射性同位素治療

這是一種在體內進行的放射治療。您會透過以下方式接受放射性液體：

- 透過口服飲料或膠囊
- 或靜脈注射。

癌細胞比正常細胞吸收更多液體。這將摧毀癌細胞。

治療後，您的體液會有輕微的放射性。這個狀況會逐漸回復正常。您的團隊會向您提供關於使用廁所和安全清理任何溢出體液的指導。他們可能要求您避免與兒童或懷孕的人有密切接觸。他們會告訴您需要這樣做多長時間。

如果您需要留院接受治療，您可能會被要求一直獨處房間內。如果您對此感到擔心，請告訴您的團隊，以便他們能夠提供幫助。

放射治療的副作用

放射治療對每個人的影響都有所不同。有些患者只有很少的副作用，而有些患者則有較多副作用。我們會在這個部分講解最常見的副作用。您不太可能會出現所有列出的副作用。

在治療前，您的放射治療團隊會與您交談，告訴您可能有的副作用。您可以問他們任何問題。如果您在治療期間出現任何副作用，請告訴您的團隊。他們可以向您提供藥物來幫助您。如果您在家時感到不舒服，請致電醫院。

疲倦

在治療期間以及治療結束後的數週或數月內，您可能會感到非常疲倦。每天去醫院的路途會使您更加疲倦。請嘗試讓自己有休息的時間。

如果可以的話，每天做一些溫和的運動是很重要的。短距離的散步可能會令您有更多能量。

感到噁心

治療可能使您感到噁心或不適。如果您在腹部或大腦附近接受治療，更有可能出現這種情況。您的治療團隊可以向您提供藥物來幫助您消除不適的感覺。

進食和喝水

有時您可能不想進食。如果發生這種情況，請嘗試少吃多餐，不要吃大餐。如果您在飲食方面出現問題，請務必告訴您的放射治療團隊。他們會為您提供建議。

照顧您的皮膚。

接受治療的部位的皮膚可能會：

- 泛紅
- 顏色變深
- 疼痛或痕癢

如果您有類似的皮膚變化，請立即告訴您的放射治療團隊。他們可以為您提供建議和治療。

以下是一些建議，可能對您有所幫助：

- 穿著由天然纖維，如棉製成的寬鬆衣服。
- 用肥皂和水溫柔地清洗您的皮膚，並輕輕地拍乾皮膚。
- 不要摩擦皮膚
- 不要使用非常熱的東西，例如加熱墊
- 不要使用冷卻墊，除非您的團隊告訴您可以使用
- 不要用濕剃方式剃鬚
- 不要使用脫毛膏或產品，包括脫毛蠟和激光治療。
- 詢問您的放射治療團隊您是否可以在皮膚上使用保濕產品或除臭劑。
- 保護皮膚避免受陽光照射。

脫髮

只會在接受治療的身體部位才會出現脫髮... 有些人對脫髮感到不開心。若您對此感到擔心，與您的醫生或護士交談會有幫助。

治療結束後，您的頭髮通常會重新長出來。有時重新長出的頭髮的紋理或顏色與之前不同。可能需要幾個月的時間才能回復以前的模樣，這取決於您接受的放射治療劑量。

您的血液出現變化

有時放射治療會降低您血液中正常血細胞的數量。您的放射治療團隊可能會為您安排驗血，檢查您的血細胞數量。如果某些類型的血細胞水平過低，有些人需要接受治療。

如果您出現不明的瘀傷或出血，請務必告訴您的團隊。包括：

- 流鼻血
- 牙齦出血
- 皮膚上出現看起來像皮疹的微小紅色或紫色斑點。
- 月經過多
- 小便或大便帶血

如果出現以下情況，您也應該立即聯絡您的放射治療團隊：

- 您的體溫超過 37.5°C (99.5°F) 或低於 36°C (96.8°F)
- 您忽然感覺不適，即使體溫正常
- 您出現受感染的症狀，包括：
 - 身體發抖
 - 喉嚨痛
 - 咳嗽
 - 氣喘
 - 腹瀉
 - 尿頻或排尿時不適。

腹瀉

如果您是在骨盆附近接受治療，出現稀便或腹瀉是很常見的。您可能比平時更頻密如廁。請務必喝大量的液體。您的醫生或護士可以告訴您最好喝甚麼飲料。如果您出現腹瀉或肚子（腹部）疼痛，請告訴醫院的工作人員。他們可以向您提供藥片來幫助您。

排尿出現問題

對膀胱附近進行治療會引起副作用，例如：

- 尿頻
- 夜間排尿
- 排尿時感到灼熱（類似尿道感染）
- 無法控制需要立即排尿
- 尿液帶血
- 少量漏尿（尿失禁）

如果您在治療期間或之後出現任何副作用，請務必告訴您的放射治療團隊。多喝液體可能有幫助。

如果您出現以下情況，請立即告知您的醫生或護士：

- 您的症狀惡化
- 體溫升高
- 您覺得自己無法排尿。

前列腺或陰莖癌的放射治療有時會導致排尿困難。如果出現這種情況，您可能需要藥物的幫助。或者您可能暫時需要將一根管子（導尿管）放入膀胱。

口腔疼痛

如果您的頭部或頸部接受了治療，您的口腔可能會感到酸痛。這可能令到吞嚥困難。在治療期間，您必須妥善地照顧您的口腔。您的團隊會告訴您如何做到。避免以下各項會有幫助：

- 吸煙
- 飲酒
- 進食非常熱的食物。

如果您的口腔感到疼痛或有口腔潰瘍，請務必告訴醫生或護士。他們可以給您漱口水和止痛藥來幫助您。

晚期和長期的副作用

放射治療需要精心策劃，而治療方法也越來越精確。因此，您的團隊可以在治療癌症時，也能夠盡量減少對身體其他部位的損害。

但您仍然有可能出現以下副作用的風險：

- 治療後沒有好轉的副作用 - 這些副作用稱為長期副作用
- 幾個月或幾年後才開始出現副作用 - 這些稱為晚期副作用。

如果您還有接受其他治療，例如化療，這種風險可能更高。

在您決定接受癌症治療之前，您的團隊會向您解釋出現這些副作用的風險。

獲得合適的護理和援助

如果您患有癌症並且不會說英語，您可能會擔心會影響您的癌症治療和護理。但是您的醫療團隊應該可以為您提供能滿足您需要的護理、援助和資訊。

我們知道，有時尋找合適的援助可能會面對額外的困難。例如，如果您有工作或家庭，可能很難空到醫院出席預約覆診。您可能還會擔心金錢和交通費。所有這些事情都會讓人感到壓力和難以應對。

但我們可以提供幫助。我們的免費支持熱線 0808 808 00 00 可以用您的語言就您的情況提供建議。您可以與護士、經濟援助顧問、福利權益顧問和工作援助顧問交談。

我們還向癌症患者提供麥克米倫（Macmillan）資助金。這是一次性的款項，可用於支付醫院停車費、交通費、托兒或暖氣費等費用。

Macmillan 能夠如何幫助您

在 Macmillan，我們知道癌症確診後會如何影響一切，我們在這裡為您提供援助。

麥克米倫支援熱線（Macmillan Support Line）

我們有口譯員，所以您可以使用您的語言與我們溝通。您只需用英語告訴我們您希望使用哪種語言即可。我們可以幫助您解決醫療問題，為您提供有關經濟援助的資訊，或者在您想要與人交談的時候聆聽您的意見。熱線服務時間為每日上午 8 時至晚上 8 時。致電 0808 808 00 00 聯絡我們。

網上對話

您可以向我們發送網上對話資訊，說明您需要口譯員。您只需用英語告訴我們您希望使用哪種語言，我們將安排工作人員與您聯絡。點擊「與我們聊天」按鍵，該按鍵顯示在網站的各個頁面上。或者前往 macmillan.org.uk/talktous

Macmillan 網站

我們的網站有很多關於癌症的英文資訊。如果您想以其他語言進一步瞭解癌症，請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations

我們亦可以為您安排翻譯。請發電子郵件至：

cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk，告訴我們您需要的資訊。

資訊中心

我們的資訊和援助中心設在醫院、圖書館和流動中心。前往任何一個中心以獲取您需要的資訊並與工作人員面對面交談。瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres 查找離您最近的中心或致電 0808 808 00 00 聯絡我們。

本地支援團體

您可以在支援團體中與其他受癌症影響的人交流。瀏覽

macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups 查找離您最近的援助團體或致電 0808 808 00 00 聯絡我們。

Macmillan 網上社群

您亦可以前往 macmillan.org.uk/community 與其他受癌症影響的人士交流。不論是白天還是夜晚，您都可以隨時使用該服務。您可以分享您的經驗、提出問題，或者只是閱讀其他人的帖子。

詞語清單

詞語 (繁體中文)	英語	如何用英語說 (英語單詞的音譯)	釋義
子宮	Womb	旺姆	身體內的一個圓形器官，位於腹部下方。如果您懷孕，這裡是嬰兒生長的地方。擁有子宮的人包括女人、跨性別男人和出生時被認定為女性的人。
子宮頸	Cervix	沙威斯	子宮頸是子宮的入口。它位於體內陰道的頂部。擁有子宮頸的人包括女人、跨性別男人和出生時被認定為女性的人。
化療	Chemotherapy	兼模化力疲	使用藥物殺死癌細胞的癌症治療方法。
手術	Surgery	沙注利	進行手術。
良性	Benign	班能	體內的一個腫塊，不是癌症，不會擴散到身體的其他任何地方。
放射性	Radioactive	喂哋澳押貼	如果某種物質具有放射性，即是它會釋放輻射。
前列腺	Prostate	破時地	體內的一個小腺體。它在膀胱附近。有前列腺的人群包括男人、跨性別女人和出生時被認定為男性的人。
骨盆	Pelvis	拋威斯	臀部之間和肚臍下方的部位。
副作用	Side effects	晒易菲	因癌症治療而產生的不良影響。例如，脫髮、感到不適或疲倦。大多數副作用會在治療結束後消失。
康復	Cured	僑特	當體內已沒有癌細胞的時候。
掃描	Scan	斯京	醫生對身體內部拍攝照片。
淋巴系統	Lymphatic system	念忽剔 施時丞	全身幫助對抗感染的管道和腺體網路。

細胞	Cells	些思	構成我們身體器官及組織的微小組成部分。
陰道	Vagina	哇爭娜	身體內部的一個通道。陰道的入口在兩腿之間。陰道的頂部是子宮頸，它通向子宮。擁有陰道的人包括女人、跨性別男人和出生時被認定為女性的人。
惡性	Malignant	咩力臨	體內出現一個癌症腫塊，會擴展到身體其他部位。
腫瘤	Tumour	端麻	以異常方式生長的細胞群。異常細胞不斷繁殖並形成腫塊。
腹瀉	Diarrhoea	大苛喇	出現軟便或水便。您可能需要頻繁或緊急如廁。您可能出現肚痛。
避孕	Contraception	抗查些純	避免懷孕的藥物或裝置。

更多繁體中文資訊

我們提供更多有關下列主題的繁體中文資訊：

癌症類型	應對癌症
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 乳癌 • 子宮頸癌 • 大腸癌 • 肺癌 • 前列腺癌 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 癌症與新冠病毒 • 如果您患有癌症，可申請的福利 • 飲食問題與癌症 • 生命的終結 • 健康飲食 • 患癌時獲得費用幫助 • 若您確診患有癌症 - 快速指南 • 癌症治療的副作用 • 疲倦（疲勞）與癌症 • 自助措施
治療	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 化療 • 放射治療 • 手術 	

若想查看相關資訊，請瀏覽 macmillan.org.uk/translations

參考文獻與致謝

本資訊由麥克米倫癌症援助機構（Macmillan Cancer Support）癌症資訊開發團隊編寫和編輯。本資訊是由翻譯公司提供的繁體中文翻譯版本。

本資訊以 Macmillan 小冊子《**瞭解放射治療**》為基礎編製而成。我們可以將副本發送給您，但完整手冊只有英語版本。

本資訊經有關專家審閱，並獲得我們的首席醫療編輯 David Gilligan（腫瘤學顧問）的批准。

同時感謝審閱本資訊的癌症患者。

我們所有的資料都依據可獲得的最佳證據。欲瞭解我們所用資源的更多資訊，請透過 cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk 聯絡我們。

MAC12465_Chinese(Traditional)

內容審閱日期：2022 年 8 月

下次預訂審閱日期：2025 年 8 月

我們盡一切努力確保我們提供的資訊是準確和最新的，但您不應該依賴這些資訊來替代針對您的情況的專業建議。在法律允許的範圍內，Macmillan 不承擔與使用本出版物中的任何資訊或其中包含或提及的第三方資訊或網站相關的責任。

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Radiotherapy

This information is about radiotherapy.

Any words that are underlined are explained in the word list at the end.

The word list also includes how to say the words in English.

Many people with cancer will have radiotherapy as part of their treatment. There are different types of radiotherapy. We explain the main types in this information.

Some people will also need other treatments, such as chemotherapy or surgery. We also have information in your language about these treatments.

If you have any questions about this information, ask your doctor or nurse at the hospital where you are having treatment.

You can also call Macmillan Cancer Support on freephone **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your own language. When you call us, please tell us in English which language you need.

There is more cancer information in your language at [macmillan.org.uk/translations](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/translations)

This information is about:

- What is radiotherapy?
- Why is radiotherapy given?
- Your radiotherapy team
- Understanding your treatment
- Where is radiotherapy given?
- Planning your treatment
- Types of radiotherapy
- Side effects of radiotherapy
- Late and long-term side effects
- How Macmillan can help
- Word list
- More information in your language
- References and thanks

What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy uses high-energy rays called radiation to treat cancer. It destroys cancer cells in the area where the radiotherapy is given. It can damage normal cells too, but they usually recover after treatment finishes.

Why is radiotherapy given?

Many people have radiotherapy as part of their cancer treatment. Radiotherapy is given for different reasons.

To cure the cancer

Radiotherapy can be given to try to cure some types of cancer. It may be given on its own or with other cancer treatments such as chemotherapy. It may be given before or after surgery. Before surgery it may make the tumour smaller. After surgery, it can help destroy any cancer cells left behind.

To help with cancer symptoms

If curing the cancer is not possible, you may have radiotherapy to help control the symptoms of the cancer. This is called palliative radiotherapy.

Your radiotherapy team

Consultant clinical oncologist

This is a doctor who treats cancer with radiotherapy. They help plan your treatment. You may see them before, during and after your treatment. You can also ask to see them between appointments.

Radiographers

The team of radiographers help to plan your treatments and give you the radiotherapy. They also give you advice about any side effects or worries that you may have.

Clinical nurse specialists

Many cancer centres have specialist cancer nurses. They are sometimes called a clinical nurse specialist (CNS). They are nurses who are experts in the type of cancer you have. You can talk to them about any concerns you have. They can give you support and information during and after your treatment. They can also help you manage any side effects.

Your key worker

Your key worker is the person to contact if you need more information or support. Usually, one radiographer or specialist nurse in your team is your key worker. If you are not sure who your key worker is, ask someone at your next appointment.

Understanding your treatment

Before you have treatment, your doctor, nurse or radiographer will explain:

- why you need it
- how often you will have it
- the possible side effects
- how you may feel after the treatment.

No treatment should be given unless you understand why you are having it and how you may feel. You will be asked to give your permission before you have any treatment. This is called consent. It shows that you agree to treatment and understand its possible side effects.

It is a good idea to take someone with you who speaks your language and English. Sometimes the hospital can provide an interpreter for you. They usually need to arrange this in advance. So if you need an interpreter, tell the hospital before the appointment.

Where is radiotherapy given?

Radiotherapy is given in hospital. You usually have your treatment as a day patient. This means you can go home after the treatment and you do not need to stay overnight. With some types of radiotherapy, you may need to stay in hospital for a few days.

If you are unwell or also having chemotherapy, you may need to stay in hospital as an inpatient. In this case, you will go to the radiotherapy department each day from the ward. If you have to travel a long way to the hospital for radiotherapy treatment you may have it as an inpatient.

Planning your treatment

Before you start your treatment, it needs to be planned. Radiotherapy is planned carefully for each person. This is to make sure the treatment works as well as it can and causes as few side effects as possible. Planning your treatment may take more than 1 visit. Your radiotherapy team will tell you what to expect.

Scans

You will have 1 or more scans before you start treatment. This helps your team decide how much radiotherapy you need. It also helps them plan exactly where to give the radiotherapy.

Before a scan, you may be asked to change into a hospital gown. Someone from the team may also give you an injection of dye into a vein. This helps get a clear picture from the scan.

Moulds and masks

You may need a mould or radiotherapy mask for your treatment. If you need one, your radiotherapy team will make it for you. A mould or mask helps you stay still and in the correct position. Moulds are for a leg, arm, or other body part. Masks are for the head or neck.

A mould or mask is made of a plastic mesh. It fits tightly but it should not be uncomfortable. You only wear it for short periods of time. You would wear it:

- when your treatment is being planned
- when you have your treatment.

You can breathe normally while you are wearing a mask.

A radiotherapy mask



Marks on the skin

Someone from your radiotherapy team may make small, permanent marks on your skin. The marks show exactly where to give the radiotherapy. The marks are made in the same way as a tattoo. These marks will only be made with your permission. If you are worried about them or already have a tattoo in the treatment area, tell your radiographer.

Fertility

Radiotherapy can affect your ability to get pregnant or make someone pregnant. Many people find this difficult to deal with. If you are worried about this, talk to your doctor or nurse before treatment starts. They can tell you what to expect and about ways to protect your fertility. Speaking to a counsellor or religious leader may also be helpful.

Contraception

Your doctor may advise you not to become pregnant or make someone pregnant. This is because radiotherapy may harm a developing baby. It is important to use contraception during and for a few months after radiotherapy. You can talk to your doctor or nurse if you are worried about this.

Types of radiotherapy

There are different types of radiotherapy:

- **External radiotherapy** – given from outside the body by a radiotherapy machine.
- **Internal radiotherapy** – when a radioactive material is put into your body. There are two types of internal radiotherapy: brachytherapy and radioisotope therapy.

How you have radiotherapy will depend on where the cancer is in the body and the type of cancer. Some cancers are treated with both external and internal radiotherapy

Ask your doctor to explain which type you are having, so you can read the right parts of this information.

External beam radiotherapy

This is when radiotherapy is given from outside the body using a radiotherapy machine. You usually have 1 session of radiotherapy a day, often with a rest at the weekends. Some hospitals give treatment at the weekends too, with a rest during the week instead.

How many treatments you have will depend on the type and size of the cancer.

Treatment only takes a few minutes each day, but you may need to wait for your treatment if the hospital is busy. It can help to do something while you wait, like read or listen to music.

Before your first treatment, the radiotherapy team will explain what will happen. They may ask you to change into a hospital gown. It is normal to feel worried about having treatment. But it usually gets easier as you get to know your radiotherapy team and what happens.

It may take a little while to get you in the correct position for treatment. You will need to lie very still. The radiographers will dim the lights. Then they will leave the room while the treatment happens. Having radiotherapy does not hurt and the radiotherapy machine does not usually touch you.

Someone having external beam radiotherapy



The radiographers will watch you from the next room, either through a window or on a screen. No one else will be able to see you. There is usually an intercom, so you can talk to them if you need to during your treatment.

The machine may move around your body to give the treatment from different directions. Once the treatment is over, the radiographers will come back into the room and help you down from the machine.

This treatment will not make you radioactive. It is safe for you to be with other people, including children, after your treatment.

Brachytherapy

Brachytherapy is a type of radiotherapy given inside the body. It is mainly used to treat cancers in the prostate, cervix and womb. Your healthcare team will explain your treatment plan. This may also involve external beam radiotherapy before or after brachytherapy or other treatments such as chemotherapy, hormonal therapy or targeted therapy.

Brachytherapy uses radioactive sources that are placed in your body near the cancer. You may be asleep under a general anaesthetic when it is put in. Or you may have painkiller injections.

You may have your treatment and go home on the same day or you may stay in hospital. This depends on the type of brachytherapy you have. During your treatment in hospital you may be alone in the treatment room for some time while the radiotherapy is given. This is to protect others from the treatment. Tell your team if you are worried about this so they can help. They will explain how long your treatment will take.

As soon as the source is removed from your body, there is no risk to people around you. You are not radioactive.

For some types of brachytherapy, the source is not removed. It is safe for you to be around most other people. Your team may ask you to avoid close contact with children or people who are pregnant. They will tell you how long you need to do this.

Your team will give you information about your treatment to carry with you at all times.

Radioisotope therapy

This is a type of radiotherapy given inside the body. You have a radioactive liquid:

- by mouth as a drink or capsules
- as an injection into a vein.

Cancer cells take in the liquid more than normal cells do. This destroys the cancer cells.

After treatment your body fluids are slightly radioactive. This will gradually return to normal. Your team will give you instructions about using the toilet and cleaning up any spilled body fluids safely. They may ask you to avoid close contact with children or people who are pregnant. They will tell you how long you need to do this.

If you need to stay in hospital for your treatment, you may be asked to stay alone in your room all the time. Tell your team if you are worried about this so they can help.

Side effects of radiotherapy

Radiotherapy affects everyone differently. Some people have very few side effects while others have more. We describe the most common side effects here. It is unlikely that you will get all of these.

Before your treatment, your radiotherapy team will talk to you about which side effects you may get. Ask them any questions you may have. Tell your team if you have any side effects during treatment. They can give you advice or medicines to help. If you feel unwell when you are at home, call the hospital.

Tiredness

You may feel very tired during treatment and for weeks or months after it finishes. Travelling to hospital each day can make you even more tired. Try to allow yourself time to rest.

It is important to do some gentle exercise each day if you can. A short walk may give you more energy.

Feeling sick

Treatment can make you feel sick or be sick. This is more likely if you have treatment near the tummy or the brain. Your treatment team can give you medicine to help to stop you feeling sick.

Eating and drinking

Sometimes you may not want to eat. If this happens, try having regular small snacks rather than large meals. If you are having problems with eating it is important to tell your radiotherapy team. They will give you advice.

Looking after your skin

The skin in the area that is treated may get:

- red
- darker
- sore or itchy.

If you have skin changes like these, tell your radiotherapy team straight away. They can give you advice and treatments.

Here are some tips that may help:

- wear loose-fitting clothes made from natural fibres, such as cotton
- wash your skin gently with soap and water and gently pat it dry
- do not rub the skin
- do not apply very hot things such as a heating pad
- do not use cooling pads unless your team tells you it is ok
- do not wet shave
- do not use hair-removing creams or products, including wax and laser treatment
- ask your radiotherapy team if you can use moisturisers or deodorants on the skin
- protect the skin from the sun.

Hair loss

You only lose hair from the area of your body where you have treatment.. Some people feel upset about losing hair. If you are worried about it, talking to your doctor or nurse can help.

It usually grows back after treatment finishes. Sometimes it grows back a different texture or colour than before. It may take several months to grow back, depending on the dose of radiotherapy you have.

Changes in your blood

Sometimes radiotherapy can lower the number of normal blood cells in your blood. Your radiotherapy team may arrange blood tests for you to check the number of blood cells you have. Some people need treatment if the level of certain types of blood cells is too low.

Always tell your team if you have bruising or bleeding and you do not know why. This includes:

- nosebleeds
- bleeding gums
- tiny red or purple spots on the skin that may look like a rash
- heavy periods
- blood in your pee or poo

You should also contact your radiotherapy team **straight away** if:

- your temperature goes over 37.5°C (99.5°F) or below 36°C (96.8°F)
- you suddenly feel unwell, even with a normal temperature
- you have symptoms of an infection – this can include:
 - feeling shivery and shaky
 - a sore throat
 - a cough
 - breathlessness
 - diarrhoea
 - needing to pee a lot, or discomfort when you pee.

Diarrhoea

It is common to have loose stools (poo) or diarrhoea if you have treatment near your pelvis. You may need to use the toilet more often than usual. It is important to drink plenty of fluids. Your doctor or nurse can tell you what is best to drink. Tell the staff at the hospital if you have diarrhoea or tummy (abdominal) pain. They can give you tablets to help.

Problems with passing urine

Treatment near the bladder can cause side effects such as:

- passing urine (peeing) more often than usual
- passing urine during the night
- a burning feeling when you pass urine (similar to a urine infection)
- a feeling that you are not able to wait when you need to pass urine
- blood in your urine
- leaking small amounts of urine (incontinence).

Always tell your radiotherapy team if you have any side effects during or after your treatment. Drinking more fluids may help.

Tell the doctor or nurse straight away if

- your symptoms get worse
- you have a high temperature
- you feel you cannot pass urine.

Radiotherapy for prostate or penis cancer sometimes makes it difficult to pass urine. If this happens, you may need to have medication that helps. Or you may have a tube (catheter) put into the bladder for a short time.

Sore mouth

If you have treatment to your head or neck, your mouth may get sore. This may make swallowing difficult. It is important to look after your mouth during treatment. Your team will show you how to do this. It can help to avoid:

- smoking
- drinking alcohol
- very hot food.

It is important to tell the doctor or nurse if your mouth feels sore or if you have mouth ulcers. They can give you mouthwashes and painkillers to help.

Late and long-term side effects

Radiotherapy is carefully planned and treatments are becoming more and more accurate. This allows your team to treat the cancer while doing as little damage as possible to other parts of the body.

But there may still be a risk you will have side effects that:

- do not get better after treatment – these are called long-term side effects
- only start months or years later – these are called late effects.

This risk may be higher if you are also having other treatments, such as chemotherapy.

Before you decide to have cancer treatment, your team will explain your risk of developing these side effects.

Getting the right care and support for you

If you have cancer and do not speak English, you may be worried that this will affect your cancer treatment and care. But your healthcare team should offer you care, support and information that meets your needs.

We know that sometimes people may face extra challenges in getting the right support. For example, if you work or have a family it can be hard to find time to go to hospital appointments. You might also have worries about money and transport costs. All of this can be stressful and hard to cope with.

But help is available. Our free support line **0808 808 00 00** can offer advice, in your language, about your situation. You can speak to nurses, financial guides, welfare rights advisers and work support advisers.

We also offer Macmillan Grants to people with cancer. These are one-off payments that can be used for things like hospital parking, travel costs, childcare or heating bills.

How Macmillan can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we are here to support you.

Macmillan Support Line

We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your language. Just tell us, in English, the language you want to use. We can help with medical questions, give you information about financial support, or be there to listen if you need someone to talk to. The free, confidential phone line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Web chat

You can send us a web chat message saying you would like an interpreter. Tell us, in English, the language you need, and we will arrange for someone to contact you. Click on the 'Chat to us' button, which appears on pages across the website. Or go to **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**

Macmillan website

Our website has lots of information in English about cancer. There is also more information in other languages at **macmillan.org.uk/translations**

We can also arrange translations just for you. Email us at **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk** to tell us what you need.

Information centres

Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. Visit one to get the information you need and speak with someone face to face. Find your nearest centre at **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Local support groups

At a support group, you can talk to other people affected by cancer. Find out about support groups in your area at [macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups) or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Macmillan Online Community

You can also talk to other people affected by cancer online at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community) You can access it at any time of day or night. You can share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts.

Word list

Word	Meaning
Benign	A lump in the body that is not cancer and cannot spread to anywhere else in the body.
Cells	The tiny building blocks that make up the organs and tissues of our body.
Cervix	The cervix is the entrance to the <u>womb</u> . It is inside the body at the top of the <u>vagina</u> . People who have a cervix include women, trans men and people assigned female at birth.
Chemotherapy	A cancer treatment that uses drugs to kill cancer cells.
Contraception	Drugs or devices that prevent pregnancy.
Cured	When there are no cancer cells left in the body.
Diarrhoea	When you have soft or watery poo. You might need the toilet more than usual or very urgently. You may also have tummy pain.
Lymphatic system	A network of vessels and glands throughout the body that helps to fight infection.
Malignant	A lump in the body that is cancer and can spread around the body.
Pelvis	The area between your hips and below your belly button.
Prostate	A small gland inside the body. It is near the bladder. People who have a prostate include men, trans women and people assigned male at birth.
Radioactive	If something is radioactive, it means it releases radiation.
Scan	When doctors take a picture of the inside of your body.
Side effects	Unwanted effects of cancer treatment. For example, hair loss, feeling sick or tiredness. Most side effects go away after treatment finishes.
Surgery	Having an operation.
Tumour	A group of cells that are growing in an abnormal way. The abnormal cells keep multiplying and form a lump.
Vagina	A passageway inside the body. The entrance to the vagina is between the legs. At the top of the vagina is the <u>cervix</u> , which then leads to the <u>womb</u> . People who have a vagina include women, trans men and people assigned female at birth

Womb	A round organ inside the body in the lower tummy area. It is where a baby grows if you are pregnant. People who have a cervix include women, trans men and people assigned female at birth
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More information in your language

We have information in your language about these topics:

<p>Types of cancer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breast cancer • Cervical cancer • Large bowel cancer • Lung cancer • Prostate cancer <p>Treatments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemotherapy • Radiotherapy • Surgery 	<p>Coping with cancer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer and coronavirus • Claiming benefits when you have cancer • Eating problems and cancer • End of life • Healthy eating • Help with costs when you have cancer • If you're diagnosed with cancer – A quick guide • Side effects of cancer treatment • Tiredness (fatigue) and cancer • What you can do to help yourself
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To see this information, go to [macmillan.org.uk/translations](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/translations)

References and thanks

This information has been written and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been translated into your language by a translation company.

The information included is based on the Macmillan booklet **Understanding radiotherapy**. We can send you a copy, but the full booklet is only available in English.

This information has been reviewed by relevant experts and approved by our Senior Medical Editor, David Gilligan, Consultant Clinical Oncologist.

Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this information.

All our information is based on the best evidence available. For more information about the sources we use, please contact us at cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk

Content reviewed: August 2022

Next planned review: August 2025

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up-to-date but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication or third party information or websites included or referred to in it.

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