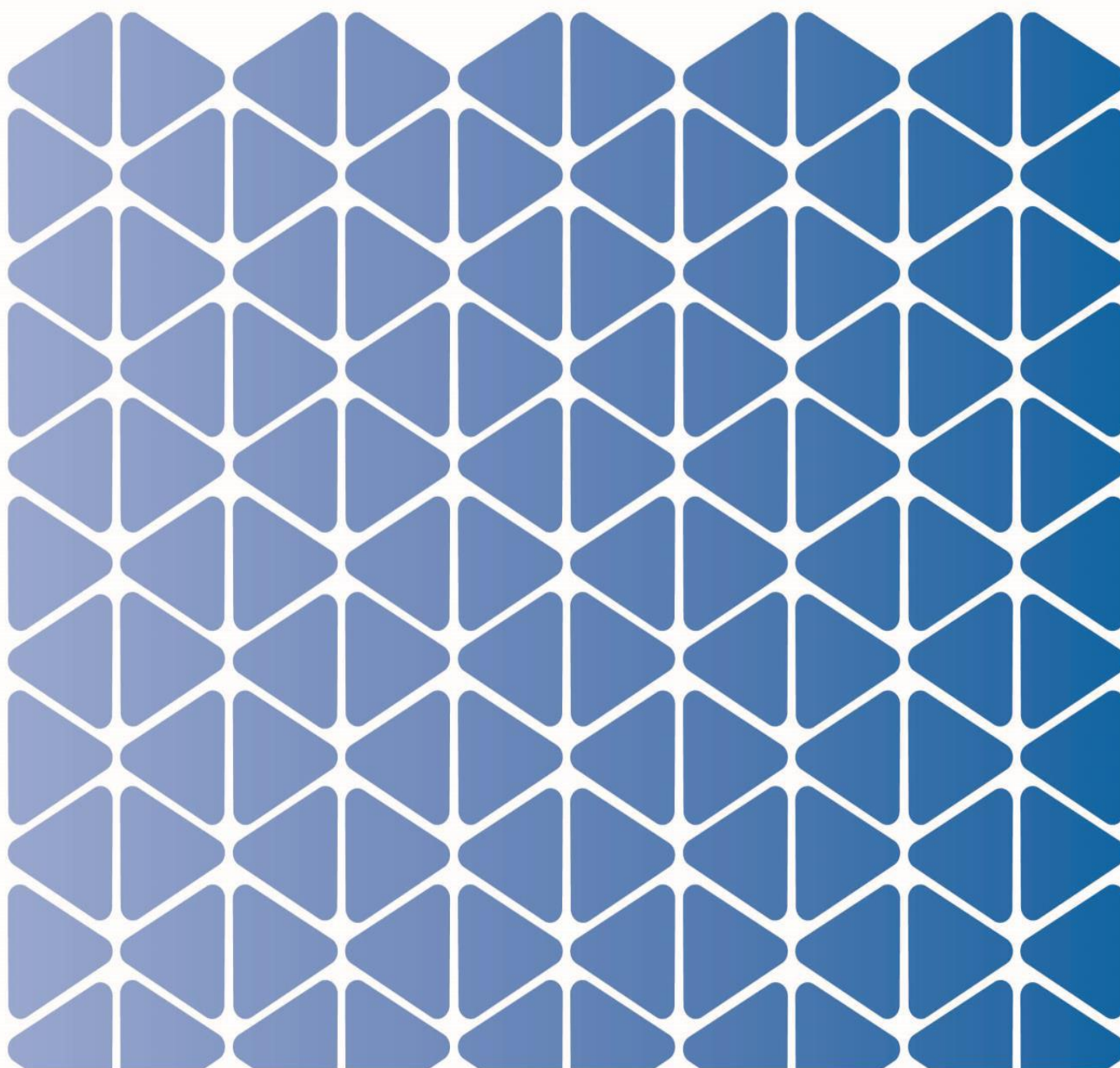


DIETARY ADVICE FOR PATIENTS RECEIVING RADIOTHERAPY TO THE PELVIS



This leaflet is to assist with bowel and bladder preparations for your radiotherapy treatment.

It is normal to have gas in your bowels; this could be due to diet or the air that is swallowed when eating or drinking, you may also notice an increase in wind or bloating as a side effect of the treatment. Too much gas may move the position of internal organs to be different to the original CT planning scan. The information provided is to help minimise gas build up to ensure that your treatment can be delivered accurately and to reduce long-term side effects.

Please do not change your diet dramatically, however if you do suffer from **wind/bloating** try the following:

- Peppermint tea or peppermint oil capsules; some people find this helps to reduce gas.
- Aim for regular meals and snacks throughout the day i.e. 3 small meals with 2-3 snacks in between. Going long periods without eating can increase gas in the bowel.
- Eat in a relaxed environment, chew food slowly and try to avoid swallowing air with food (i.e. by talking or taking large mouthfuls).
- Keep hydrated by drinking regular cups of water spread throughout the day and between meals. The amount of water to drink may be different for each person, the best way to monitor your hydration is by ensuring your urine is clear in colour.
- Try not to drink large amounts of fluids during meals, opt for small sips at a time.
- Try to avoid fizzy drinks, diet drinks, alcohol and keep caffeinated beverages to a minimum (coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks).
- Take gentle exercise daily, avoid sitting for long periods of time. This will help move any trapped wind.
- Opt for loose fitting clothing over tight fitted.
- Try to stop or reduce smoking and/ or vaping. Smoking and vaping can cause irritation and disruption to your digestion and increase amount of air you swallow, causing bloating and trapped wind. Please let a member of staff know if you would like further support to stop smoking.
- Avoid chewing gum and artificial sweeteners (e.g. sorbitol, aspartame).
- Some people find that spicy, fried or fatty foods can increase wind/bloating - try to avoid or reduce these as much as possible.
- Avoid food which makes you feel bloated or gives you excess wind, everyone is affected by different foods; see suggestions below for examples of problem foods.

Foods that may increase symptoms of wind/bloating:

- Onions, garlic, cabbage, sprouts, broccoli, sweet corn, cucumber, radishes, spinach, prunes, dried fruit, kiwi, banana, fresh apple or pear
- Baked beans, Kidney beans, nuts, peas, lentils, chickpeas, and other pulses

Dietary Fibre:

You may be advised to alter the amount of fibre in your diet due to your radiotherapy side effects. **Do not make dietary changes unless advised by a healthcare professional.** If you do notice any bowel changes during your treatment, including constipation or diarrhoea, please inform a Radiographer for appropriate advice.

- Foods which are **low in fibre** include:
White bread, pasta and rice, potatoes without the skins, root vegetables, cornmeal, eggs, rice cereals, cornflakes and lean white meat.
- Foods which are **high in fibre** include:
Wholemeal/brown cereals, breads, rice and pasta, nuts, seeds, green leafy vegetables, fruits with skin.

References and Sources of Further Information:

Macmillan Cancer Support - <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/impacts-of-cancer/bladder-and-bowel-problems>

Cancer Research UK - <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/physically/bowel-problems/types/diarrhoea/tips-coping-diarrhoea>

Prostate Cancer UK - <https://prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information-and-support/living-with-prostate-cancer/your-diet-and-physical-activity>

National Cancer Institute - <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/nutrition>

Pelvic Radiation Disease Association - <https://www.prda.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Diet-nutrition-and-PRD.pdf>

Please let us know if you are having problems emptying your bowels or if you wish to see a dietitian.

This is to be used as a guide only. If you continue to have on-going concerns with your nutritional intake, please discuss this with one of the team who can refer you to a Dietician.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.