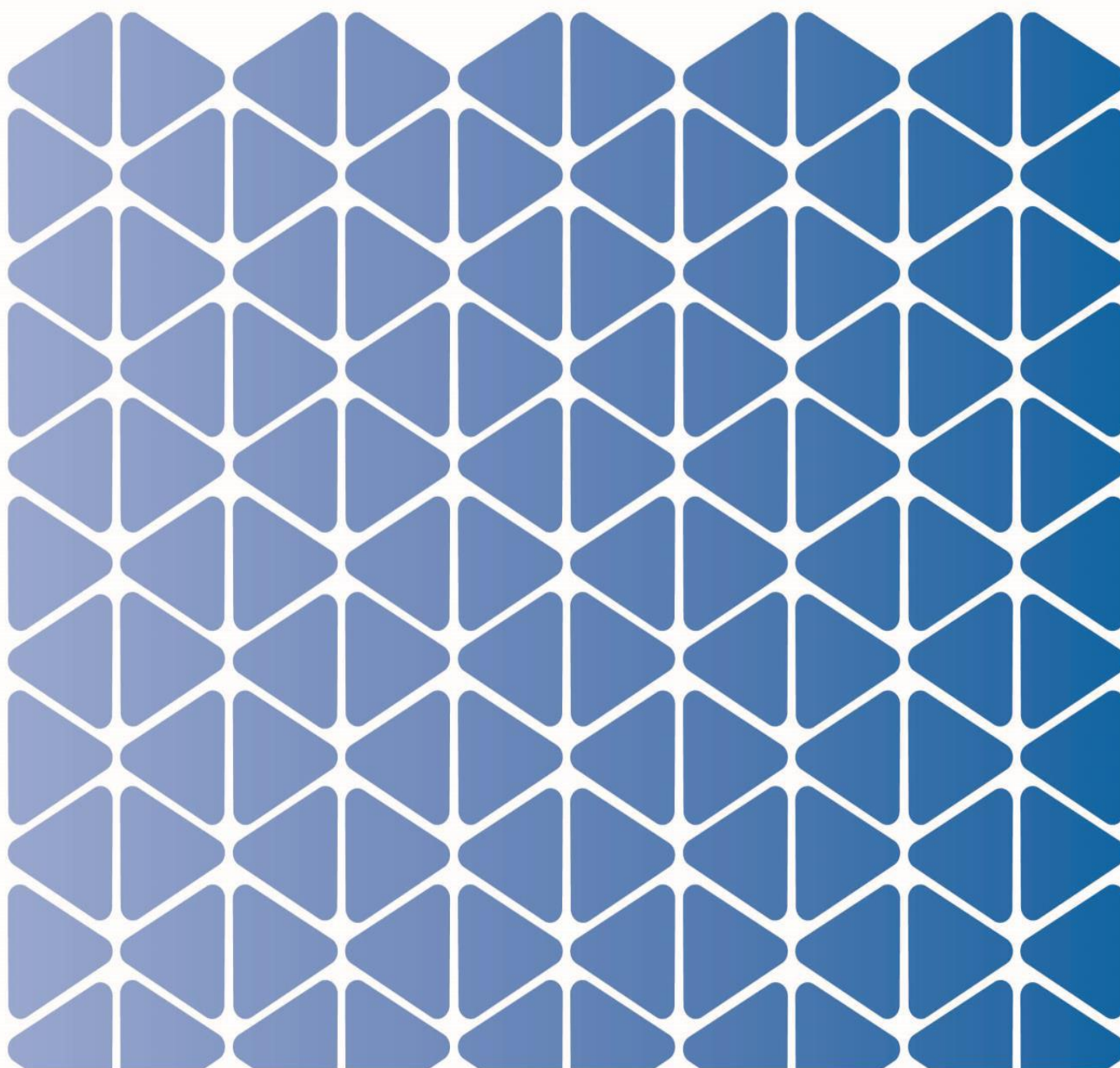


PATIENT INFORMATION**RADIOTHERAPY INFORMATION
FOR TREATMENT FOR BONE PAIN**



Worcestershire Oncology Centre

Improving cancer services in Worcestershire

Introduction

This leaflet will explain the possible side effects which may develop when receiving radiotherapy treatment for bone pain.

Radiotherapy treatment is a common and effective way to reduce bone pain caused by cancer that has spread to the bones. The aim of the treatment is to provide relief from symptoms, it will not cure the underlying disease; most patients find the treatment beneficial.

Side effects

Side effects of treatment do occur; these are usually mild and tend to develop gradually over the course of treatment. They depend on:

- the area of your body that is being treated
- the dose of radiotherapy prescribed
- your individual response.

Most side effects are of short duration and improve within days to weeks of the treatment finishing.

Tiredness.

Tiredness is a common side effect of radiotherapy. This can be due to a combination of travelling to the hospital each day, side effects of treatment, coping with your diagnosis and continuing with normal life.

Only do as much as you feel that you can and rest when you need to. Research has found that gentle exercise such as a short daily walk may help. You may need to rest and sleep more than usual.

Pain.

It can take 7-10 days for the radiotherapy to start reducing bone pain and treatment can make the pain worse for a few days before it starts to improve. It may take up to four to

six weeks for you to feel the full benefit of the radiotherapy. Continue to take any regular pain medication as prescribed.

Skin changes

The treatment may give you a skin reaction in the treatment area; this will depend on the dose of radiotherapy you receive. Your skin reaction may not develop until after the treatment has finished. It may become pink/red or darker dependant on your skin colour. You may get some peeling of the skin in the treatment area which may become flaky or itchy.

You may find it helpful to use a moisturising cream of your choice on the skin in your treatment area. Apply the cream often and thinly but not just before coming for radiotherapy.

Feeling sick

Radiotherapy to the ribs, spine or pelvis areas may make you feel sick and you may be prescribed anti-sickness medication to take before each treatment. If you continue to feel sick, please inform your treatment team.

Whilst having radiotherapy you may experience a loss in appetite. Try to eat small, high calorie meals and snacks regularly throughout the day.

Diarrhoea

Radiotherapy to the bones in your pelvis can cause some temporary diarrhoea for a few days after radiotherapy. Replace any lost fluids by increasing the amount you drink and speak to your GP if this continues.

Sore throat

Radiotherapy to the upper part of your spine can cause a temporary sore throat and difficulty in swallowing. If this happens drink plenty fluids, avoid spicy foods, avoid alcohol, and temporarily change to a softer diet.

Shortness of breath

You may experience some coughing and/or shortness of breath if your chest is in the treatment area. This is usually temporary and will settle down after treatment.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your treatment radiographers and they will be able to advise you.

The treatment does **not** make you radioactive. Once the machine has been switched off there is no radiation present. You will not be radioactive and are safe to be near pregnant people and children.

After treatment:

Radiotherapy can continue to work for some weeks after the completion of treatment. Any side effects from the treatment may continue for a couple of weeks after treatment before they start to settle down.

If you develop new symptoms after your treatment is over, or you are concerned that any side effects are not clearing up, you can contact the Macmillan Review Radiographer on 01905 761420, the Acute Oncology Service on 01905 760158 or make an appointment to see your GP.

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.