

How to prepare for radiotherapy to the pelvic region (empty bladder)

Cancer Services

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Information for patients

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Introduction

Please read this instruction leaflet before you attend your planning appointments to help you prepare treatment.

The aims of the preparation process at planning and treatment stages are:

- to ensure that the organs that are to be treated stay in the same place for the scan and all the radiotherapy treatment.
- to help reduce short and long term side effects by moving sensitive organs away from the treated area.

Preparation before starting treatment

It is important that you are well hydrated (that you have drunk plenty of fluids) before starting your treatment, so we advise you to aim to drink two to three litres of fluid a day. This does not have to be water, but keep your intake of caffeinated, fizzy and alcoholic drinks to a minimum. Please increase your intake of fluids to this level at least **one week** before the date of your planning appointment.

We need you to have an **empty bladder** and an **empty rectum (back passage)** for your planning scan and each daily treatment.

To empty your rectum we would like you to use a micro enema. You will be given a supply of these by the staff in the Radiotherapy Department.

Please inform us if you are allergic to any of the ingredients:

- Sodium Citrate
- Sodium Lauryl Sulphate
- Sorbitol

or

- If you have an inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

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Micro enema

A micro enema is used to make your rectum empty itself, either with a bowel movement or passing of wind. If you have already opened your bowels on the day of the scan, the use of the micro enema is still necessary to ensure your rectum is empty.



The liquid is inserted into your back passage through the nozzle (see above). You will be asked to do this yourself. Most patients find that they need to have a bowel movement within 15-20 minutes, with most needing to visit the toilet only once.

How to use the micro enema

1. Go to the toilet and pull off the cap from the end of the nozzle.
2. To make it easier to insert, squeeze out a drop of fluid from the tube and spread it over the nozzle.
3. Sit on the toilet and gently insert the nozzle fully into your back passage. Squeeze out all the contents and keep squeezing the tube as you remove the nozzle - this will prevent the liquid from being drawn back into the nozzle.
4. It is OK to empty your bladder at this time if you need to.
5. Throw the empty tube into the bin.
6. Please wait for 15-20 minutes or until you feel the urge to empty your bowels.
7. Go back into the toilet and try and empty your bowels. Please do not strain or worry if you cannot go or if you pass only wind - it may be that your bowel is already empty.
8. When it is time for your treatment a member of staff will come and collect you from the waiting area. They will send you to the toilet to empty your bladder and then take you in to have your treatment.

Preparation for treatment

You will need to repeat this procedure before every treatment. Although the thought of using a micro enema each day sounds unpleasant, research has shown that the use of an enema is useful and that patients tolerate it well.

Please bring **two** micro enemas with you each day, so that you have a spare.

Useful contact

If you have any questions, please contact the Radiotherapy Department:

Telephone: 0116 258 5640

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