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

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Department
Information for Patients

Introduction

Please read this instruction leaflet before you attend your planning appointments to help you prepare and understand the process.

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.

Ideally, we need you to have a comfortably full 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.

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.

Using 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. 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. Please tell a member of staff on arrival if you have managed to use your enema and results.

9. Go to the toilet and try to empty your bladder - it may be that you have already done this when using the enema but we need you to try again.

10. Drink three cups of water (water and cups are provided). This water **must** be drunk within ten minutes of emptying your bladder.

11. You will then have your scan or treatment 30 minutes after starting to drink your water.

12. After drinking the water, **do not empty your bladder again before your scan or treatment**. If you do, this will result in your treatment being delayed.

Preparation for treatment

You will need to repeat this bowel and bladder preparation 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 beneficial and that patients tolerate it well.

Please bring a spare micro enema with you each day in case we need you to repeat the preparation.

Useful contact

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

Telephone: 0116 258 5640

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.

To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

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If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net

We are a research hospital and you may be asked to take part in research

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