If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of the document, please contact us on:

020 3447 3711 (Direct line)
020 3456 7890 ext 73711/bleep 1458
0845 155 5000 ext 73711/bleep 1458

We will try our best to meet your needs.
This booklet has been written to help you now that your radiotherapy treatment is finishing. The first section describes skin care after radiotherapy. The second section attempts to explain a little of how you may feel and what you should do about any symptoms that may worry you.

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For unbroken skin
If your skin is unbroken, you are advised to:

• Wash with unperfumed soap and warm water.
• Pat skin dry with a soft towel or paper tissue.
• Avoid tight clothing.

You may also:

• Use aqueous cream, 1% hydrocortisone cream, or aloe vera cream twice a day
• Resume using talcum powder if you wish.

However: It is advisable to wait two to three weeks, or until your skin has recovered, before using a deodorant again.

For broken skin
Your skin may become broken and start to weep. This can be very sore and painful, but is a natural reaction to the radiotherapy treatment. Your skin will need medical attention to prevent any infection. From Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 17:00 please phone the radiotherapy care team for advice on:

Direct telephone: 020 3447 3729
0845 155 5000
bleep 2075, 5825 or 2222

For out of hours skin care advice, or if you have any other worries, please contact the oncology advice phone on 07947 959020.

Alternatively, please visit your GP who can arrange for nurses to do dressings (which will be prescribed) of Hydrogel (intrasite gel or Granugel®) or Lyofoam® until the area heals. Do not worry, your skin will heal in time.
Long term effects
Your skin will recover in about four to six weeks. Radiotherapy causes changes to the skin which will make it sensitive to the sun. The skin in the treated area will be especially sensitive for the first twelve months after treatment. Therefore, you should avoid exposing the treated area to strong sunlight. After this time, you can gradually increase your sun exposure but we recommend that you always use a high protection sun cream (Factor 25–40 or more) in strong sunlight.

If you are worried about your skin or any other side effects after your treatment, please phone the radiotherapy nurses or the Macmillan information and support radiographer. Any tiredness you have felt may also continue for several weeks. There is no reason why you cannot continue with life as before but you should allow yourself time to recover. Remember that everyone is different and recover at different rates.

The side effects that you experienced during your radiotherapy may continue to get worse and may take several weeks to resolve. This is normal. However, if you are worried in any way, please contact the department.

Follow up appointments
When you have finished your course of radiotherapy treatment you will be given a follow-up appointment. This may be with your radiotherapy doctor either at University College London Hospital or at the local hospital where you were originally seen. Do not leave the radiotherapy department until you have a follow-up appointment. Your radiotherapy doctor will write to your GP explaining the treatment you have received, and details of your next follow-up. Your follow-up appointments are regular opportunities to discuss any worries or concerns you may have and it is a good idea to write down any questions you may have.
Emotional and psychological issues

You may feel that you just “want to get on with life”. This is a perfectly normal reaction. Only do as much as you feel capable of doing without putting yourself under any unnecessary stress. Some patients need some time to recover from the physical and psychological effects of their treatment. Many people feel more anxious after treatment as they find the daily contact with medical personnel reassuring and once treatment is over they may feel isolated or alone. This is a normal feeling.

Your cancer journey is hard to forget and anxieties may still remain even after treatment finishes. Again, this is normal. You may become more aware of your body and be sensitive to slight changes in how you feel on a daily basis. Everyone experiences colds, headaches, coughs and aches and pains, but you may worry that such symptoms are a sign of your cancer returning. If, however, any symptoms persist and are causing you to worry, you should get in contact with:

- Your specialist nurse
- Your GP
- The Macmillan information and support radiographer
- Your consultant’s secretary.
Which symptoms to look out for

- Unusual rashes, bruises or bleeding
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation
- Unexplained loss of appetite
- Unexplained loss of weight
- Unusual lumps or swellings
- A persistent cough or fever
- A constant pain that does not go away with your usual painkillers
- Other symptoms you may have been told to watch for.

Do not ignore these symptoms and remember there are people who can help to put your mind at rest or help the problem to be dealt with.
Useful contact numbers

Local

Radiotherapy Care Team:
Direct line: 020 3447 3729
Main switchboard: 0845 155 5000
ext 73729
bleep 2222, 5825 or 2075

Alternative switchboard: 020 3456 7890
ext 73729
bleep 2222, 5825 or 2075

Macmillan Information and Support Radiographer
Mark Williams
Direct telephone: 020 3447 3711
Main switchboard: 0845 155 5000
ext 73711
bleep 1458

Alternative switchboard: 020 3456 7890
ext 73711
bleep 1458

Email: mark.williams@uclh.nhs.uk
National Health Talk Online
Website: www.healthtalkonline.org

Cancer Research UK
Website: www.cancerresearchuk.org

Carers UK
Freephone: 0808 808 7777
Wednesday to Thursday
Email: adviceline@carersuk.org
Website: www.carersuk.org

Macmillan Cancer Support
Cancer Line freephone: 0808 808 0000
Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 21:00
Textphone: 0808 808 0121
Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 18:00
Email: cancerline@macmillan.org.uk
Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

National Library for Health
Covers all aspects of health, illness and treatments
Website: www.library.nhs.uk

NHS Direct
Telephone: 0845 4647
Available 24 hours
Website: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS 24
Telephone: 08454 242424
Website: www.nhs24.com

NHS Choices
Website: www.nhs.uk

Patient UK
Comprehensive, free, up-to-date health information
Website: www.patient.co.uk
Space for notes and questions