



Radiotherapy for prostate cancer

This information is a daily treatment guide for patients having radiotherapy to their prostate at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre which includes some information about bladder retraining. If you have any questions or concerns please call the clinic radiographers (contact numbers overleaf).

Daily treatment guide

Please bring a dressing gown and slippers/ slip-on shoes with you. If you don't own a dressing gown we can provide you with one to use for the whole of your treatment.

When you arrive please check in using either the check-in machine or the reception desk. If you are a private patient please check in at the Hal Gray Unit reception near LA3.

When you check in using the check-in machine, it will tell you on the screen which treatment machine you are booked on, for that day. This may be different from the one on your printed list. This could be due to a routine service, or your treatment machine may be experiencing delays that day.

Once you have checked in please go to the toilet and try and open your bladder and bowels. (You may have been given micro-enemas to use when you had your CT planning appointment). Try not to strain, if you can't pass anything or can only pass wind that's fine.

Have a seat in the waiting area of the treatment machine you are booked on. All the machines have their own waiting area, except for LA3. The waiting area for LA3 is the main waiting room.

If you are having any side effects or have any concerns please talk to the radiographers. They are here to help you.

You will have been told at your planning appointment if you need to have an empty or full bladder.

If you need a FULL bladder for your treatment

It is important you drink normally before you come for your radiotherapy. This ensures that you are not dehydrated, otherwise the fluid you drink for your radiotherapy will be absorbed into your body tissues and not fill your bladder.

Arrive **an hour before** your appointment time.

If you haven't been able to open your bowels or your micro-enema hasn't worked or you feel bloated or gassy, please tell the radiographers.

The treatment radiographers will tell you when to drink your water (try to drink all the water in the space of 5-10 minutes and the same amount as you did at your CT planning scan).

They will then ask you when you finished drinking your water: you will have to wait the same amount of time as you did at CT to ensure your bladder becomes the same size as for your planning.

They will then ask you to get changed into your gown and slippers in the changing room just before they call you in for your treatment. There will be a basket in the changing room for you to put your belongings in. Please take this basket with you into the treatment room.

When your treatment is finished, put your gown and slippers back on and take your clothes back to the changing room to change. You have completed your treatment for the day!

If you need an EMPTY bladder for your treatment

Try to empty your bowels before you leave home.

Arrive **20 minutes before** your appointment time.

The radiographers will tell you when to empty your bladder – please don't strain, if you have nothing to pass that's fine.

They will then ask you to get changed into your gown and slippers in the changing room just before they call you in for your treatment.

There will be a basket in the changing room for you to put your belongings in. Please take this basket with you into the treatment room.

If you haven't been able to open your bowels or you feel gassy or bloated, please tell the radiographers before they treat you.

When your treatment is finished, put your gown and slippers back on and take your clothes back to the changing room to change. You have completed your treatment for the day!

Bladder retraining

Please see the attached information sheet about bladder diary/re-training. Try to start bladder training as soon as possible (after the group information session) as this can help you hold your urine better.

When you start your radiotherapy stop the bladder training. You can restart the training about six-eight weeks after finishing your treatment, or when you feel your side-effects have started to settle.

If your urinary flow is **very weak** or you are **struggling** to pass urine before starting or after your radiotherapy has finished, please contact the clinic radiographers or the 24 hour acute oncology service as soon as possible. **Do not** start bladder retraining until you are advised to by your health care team.

Contacts

Radiotherapy Appointments 020 3826 2446

If you have any specific requirements for your appointment times please let the appointment bookers know **before** you start your treatment. Appointments are very difficult to change once you start treatment.

For radiotherapy issues or concerns:

Clinic radiographers (Monday-Friday 08.00-16.30)..... 020 3826 2612 or

.....07825 024058

Emergency Contact

**24 hour Acute Oncology Service - Mount Vernon Cancer Centre: 07825 028855
or attend your nearest Accident and Emergency Department.**



Bladder Diary/Retraining

Bladder retraining is a simple and effective method used to try and overcome bladder problems including, urgency, frequency and incontinence. [Click here to download the bladder diary](#)

How does bladder retraining work?

Bladder retraining helps you to begin to hold more urine for longer periods of time. It is possible to train your bladder to do this by gradually increasing the time between each visit to the toilet.

This method sounds simple, however bladder retraining takes time and determination and will not work overnight. To have a chance of successful bladder retraining you must try and ignore the feeling that you need to go to the toilet for as long as possible.

If you can learn to ignore the feeling that you need to go straight away your bladder will begin to relax and will become less irritable. It is possible for you to be in control of your bladder and not the other way round.

How do you begin to retrain the bladder?

You must try and resist the messages that your bladder sends to you telling you that you need to go to the toilet. If you continue to respond to those messages and go to the toilet each time you feel the urge to go your feelings of urgency/frequency will continue and possibly get worse.

Resisting messages from your bladder will not be easy. When you listen to the messages and relieve yourself, you find immediate relief – but of course it is only temporary because you will start feeling uncomfortable again after only a very short time. This cycle of discomfort, even panic, followed by brief relief is very hard to break. You need to be strong and focused. Try and empty your bladder after you experience feelings of urgency. Gradually increase the amount of time you wait before you empty your bladder again. You will need to be patient and not be put off if you have accidents and failures, especially at first. You will feel rather silly, living your voiding schedule by a stopwatch, but very often this method works and can make your life a great deal easier.

Bladder diary

To help identify your bladder habits and patterns start a bladder diary, recording the amount of times you go to the toilet, how long you can wait until you go to the toilet, what you drink and so on.

From your diary you will be able to identify how long your bladder can hold on until it needs to be emptied. From here, you can set realistic goals that can help your bladder become stronger.

When you have set your goals, try not to rush to the toilet as soon as the time is up. Try if possible to resist that further urge.

At night, empty your bladder before you go to bed and try and resist any urges to further empty your bladder before you go to sleep.

The following are some things that may help make your bladder retraining successful:

- Plan your retraining schedule clearly with realistic and achievable goals.
- Focus on success – not on setbacks.
- Be patient; bladder retraining will not be a success overnight. You will need to work hard at it for some weeks.
- Be aware of any fears or worries associated with your bladder problem. In some cases these fears or worries will need to be tackled before long-lasting success is possible.

If you are frightened of having an accident while training, consider wearing light protection. Perhaps an absorbent pad in your pants, or special underwear designed to mop up small leakages (Continence products can be found by visiting our Products Section). These will remove the worry and the hassle of having to change frequently during training.

If you find you are getting nowhere after 2 to 3 weeks of work, then consider consulting your doctor or a specialist continence nurse or physiotherapist. It may be that some other medical cause is preventing your success like a persistent infection or some damage to your bladder mechanism.