



# Now that you have finished your palliative radiotherapy

Information for patients at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

This leaflet provides some useful information now that you are finishing your radiotherapy. The aim of this treatment is to ease your pain and other symptoms, and make you feel more comfortable.

## What are the side effects?

All radiotherapy produces a few side-effects, which usually go away quickly. However, we are all different and respond and recover at different rates.

### Skin

You can use your normal skin care products. Take special care to wash the area gently, use warm water (not hot), pat it dry, don't rub.

You may find that your skin in the treated area becomes slightly red and itchy. This is nothing to worry about and will usually settle in a few days. A moisturizing cream may help to soothe your skin.

### Hair Loss

Any hair loss in the treated area will depend on the dose of radiotherapy received. You will not lose hair outside the treated area. Your oncologist will discuss this with you.

### Tiredness

Tiredness is often experienced by cancer patients during and after treatment.

If you need more information about how to cope with any of the side effects from your treatment please ask at the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC). See overleaf for more details.

## How quickly will my symptoms improve?

Some of your symptoms may ease within a few days, but this can vary. For example, most bone pain takes 7-10 days to ease. This varies from patient to patient.

Some patients find that symptoms get a little worse for a few days before improving. Please do not be concerned if this seems to be happening to you.

If you have any distressing and/or urgent symptoms contact either your oncologist or clinic radiographer during normal working hours. At other times please contact the 24 hour advice line at Michael Sobell House, see contacts over the page.

You should continue caring for your skin until it has settled back to normal.

If your oncologist has given you some medication, take it as prescribed. You can continue to take your usual pain killers as and when needed.

## Further advice

- do not apply heat, such as a hot water bottle, to the treated area
- keep the area out of direct sunlight especially during the hottest part of the day for the next six months
- don't expose your skin to the sun without using a high factor sun screen

## What about my follow-up appointments?

After your treatment has finished your oncologist may refer you for check-ups. This will depend on the area being treated and may be with:

your GP (family doctor)

or

a physician at your District General Hospital (DGH).

or

with your oncologist

Your oncologist will write to your GP and explain the treatment you have received.

There may be a nurse specialist at your DGH or Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, who can also provide help and support.

## Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC)

This centre offers information and support to patients and their families and is located next to the Chemotherapy Suite by Gate 3. The staff at LJMC work as part of the overall team caring for you.

The centre provides counselling and a range of services including relaxation sessions and complementary therapies.

People who have had cancer will say that during their illness they experienced a range of emotions, expected and unexpected. Many find it to be a stressful, anxious and confusing time, both as individuals and within relationships.

Some patients find it harder to make decisions or to face up to things, feeling overwhelmed and unable to focus on positive aspects within their lives.

If you have difficulty making sense of your feelings or can relate to any of these experiences, you may find talking it through with a trained counsellor/psychologist helpful.

Counselling aims to provide individuals and families with a chance to understand these new experiences in a way that can help them feel more manageable.

You can drop in without an appointment or call the LJMC helpline on 020 3826 2555.

Your follow up appointment with

Dr \_\_\_\_\_

at \_\_\_\_\_

Please call \_\_\_\_\_  
to make your appointment.

## Contacts

Your Mount Vernon Hospital number: .....

The name of your oncologist: .....

The oncologist's secretary tel no: .....

Your nurse specialist tel no: .....

Clinic radiographer .....020 3826 2612  
.....or 07825 024058

**Michael Sobell House 24 hour advice line: ..... 020 3826 2377**

Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre .....020 3826 2555  
Mon–Fri: 9.30am–4.30pm