

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PROTON BEAM THERAPY



Proton beam therapy is a type of radiotherapy used to deliver radiation to specific parts of the body to destroy cancer cells. It is only offered at some hospitals in the UK. Here are some questions you might have before starting proton beam therapy.

How will I be given proton beam therapy?

A machine rotates 360 degrees around you and aims a proton beam at the area that needs to be treated. It uses a beam of high energy protons (small parts of atoms). The beam is very accurate, so little or no radiation affects normal tissue around the area being treated. This might mean that you have fewer long-term side effects.

Will it hurt?

You won't feel any pain while you're having proton beam therapy and nothing will directly touch your body. The machine will make noise and sometimes there is a smell which can be unpleasant. Sometimes people see flashing lights during their treatment, which is a completely normal and safe side effect.

Can I have someone with me?

You'll be by yourself when you're having proton beam therapy but there will be staff nearby who can hear and see you. You can speak to them at any time if you need them.



What side effects might I get?

Common side effects include fatigue, nausea, skin reactions and hair loss in the area being treated. They can be quite mild, but still unpleasant and uncomfortable. Short-term side effects usually settle down within 6-8 weeks. You'll be told about specific side effects that might affect you before treatment starts.

Can I still have sex while I'm having proton beam therapy?

Yes, but always use barrier types of contraception, like condoms and dams, to protect you and your partner and to stop you getting pregnant. Let your care team know if you think you might be pregnant as this might affect your treatment.

Will it affect my fertility?

Proton therapy can affect fertility; it depends on the part of the body that is being treated. Speak to your consultant or doctor to find out what impact it may have on your fertility.



You can find more information on proton beam therapy and possible side effects at **www.teenagecancertrust.org/protonbeam**