

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT EXTERNAL BEAM RADIOTHERAPY



Radiotherapy is a type of cancer treatment which uses high energy X-rays to kill cancer cells. Here are some questions you might have before starting radiotherapy.

How will I be given external beam radiotherapy?

A machine targets X-rays at your cancer and a small area surrounding the cancer. Radiotherapy is personalised for each patient. Sessions can last between 10 mins and an hour depending on your treatment plan. You'll need to lie very still during the process, but you can listen to music, audio books or podcasts to help distract you.

Will it hurt?

The machine doesn't touch you and the treatment itself doesn't hurt but you might experience some side effects. You can take your normal pain killers when you're having treatment if you need to.



Can I have someone with me?

You'll be alone when you're having radiotherapy but the radiographers will be watching, and you can interrupt at any time if you need them. If you're nervous they might have ideas of how to help you relax, such as using a stress ball or wearing an eye mask.



What side effects might I get?

External beam radiotherapy will not make you radioactive.

Side effects will depend on which part of your body is being treated and the dose you're given. You might experience short and long-term side effects. Common side effects might include skin reactions and hair loss in the treatment area. You'll be told about specific side effects that might affect you before treatment starts.

Will it impact my fertility?

Having radiotherapy around your ovaries or testicles can affect your ability to have children. Your doctor will discuss this with you before treatment, if you have further questions about this or anything else you can always speak to your care team.



Can I still have sex while having radiotherapy?

Yes, but you or your partner should always use contraception.

Will I need a radiotherapy mask?

If you're having radiotherapy to your head or neck you might need a mask to keep your head in the same place.



You can find more information on radiotherapy, side effects and hear from other young people about their experiences at **www.teenagecancertrust.org/radiotherapy**