

## Patient information

# Pituitary Radiotherapy

### Diabetes and Endocrinology

#### **Why do I need radiotherapy?**

Pituitary tumours are almost always benign (non-cancerous), which means that they do not spread to other parts of the body. However, even though the tumour is not cancerous, you may still need radiotherapy to reduce the size of the tumour. This is because your tumour may be affecting surrounding tissues, for example the optic nerve or major blood vessels. You may not be able to have surgery, or you may be under-producing or overproducing pituitary hormones

#### **I have had surgery so why do I need radiotherapy?**

It is not always possible to remove the whole of the pituitary tumour during surgery, so some patients need radiotherapy to help shrink the remaining tumour, decrease the chance of tumour re-growth and reduce excess hormone secretion.

#### **What is radiotherapy?**

Radiotherapy is a method of treating your pituitary tumour that uses carefully calculated and measured doses of radiation. It is normally used to treat cancer (malignant disease), although occasionally it is used to treat non-malignant conditions.

The treatment is given using a machine called a Linear Accelerator, which produces high energy beams of X-rays. It can be used to treat many types of tumours. When used for pituitary tumours low doses are given each day, over four to five weeks. Each session of the treatment takes a few minutes and is painless.

#### **How does radiotherapy work?**

Radiotherapy works by destroying the pituitary tumour cells, which are then unable to repair themselves.

#### **Where will I have the radiotherapy?**

The radiotherapy will be carried out at the Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology. The staff at the Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology will provide you with more specific information on radiotherapy when you attend your first appointment. Below are links to the Clatterbridge centre leaflets about Radiotherapy:

**[www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/treatment-and-care/patient-information/radiotherapy/radiotherapy-patient-information-leaflet](http://www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/treatment-and-care/patient-information/radiotherapy/radiotherapy-patient-information-leaflet)**

**<https://www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/treatment-and-care/patient-information/pituitary-and-craniopharyngioma-radiotherapy>**

## **Is radiotherapy the same for everyone?**

No. Every patient who has radiotherapy will have an individual treatment plan made especially for them.

## **What does my treatment plan include?**

### **The treatment plan usually includes:**

- CT or MRI scan.
- Treatment mask.
- Treatment.

Your specialist will explain how he or she plans to treat you in more detail at your first clinic appointment.

## **How long will the radiotherapy take to work?**

Following radiotherapy the damaged tumour cells slowly die. It is important to realise that tumour cells are not destroyed immediately. The time taken to see a response varies in each patient and can take several years.

## **What other effects am I likely to experience?**

Pituitary radiotherapy can also damage the 'good' cells in the pituitary gland. This will mean that you may not be able to make some of your hormones to help keep you well. If this happens, we will need to replace them, usually with tablets.

## **Further appointments**

You will normally be seen once in the Radiotherapy Clinic when your radiotherapy treatment is completed and then you will be discharged.

You will continue in follow up at Endocrine clinic and the Joint Pituitary / Neurosurgery clinic at the Walton Centre.

We will check, at least once a year, that you can produce the hormones you need. This will normally happen when you attend for an appointment, via bloods tests. If we find that you need replacement of any of your hormones, we will arrange this with your family doctor (GP).

As your condition stabilises, you will be reviewed six to twelve monthly. As mentioned above, we will assess your hormonal status on a yearly basis.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further information

**Please feel free to contact the Endocrine Specialist Nurses with any questions you may have. There is an answer machine where you can leave your name and contact details. We will return all calls.**

### **The Endocrinology Specialist Nurses (RLUH)**

**Tel: 0151 706 2417**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2417**

### **The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre**

**Clatterbridge Road**

**Bebington, Wirral**

**CH63 4JY**

**Tel: 0151 556 5000**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 556 5000**

**[www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk](http://www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk)**

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**Review date: March 2028**

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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