Radiotherapy after breast surgery
A guide for patients and their carers
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Christie website

For more information about The Christie and our services, please visit [www.christie.nhs.uk](http://www.christie.nhs.uk) or visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford.
Introduction

This booklet is to tell you about radiotherapy after breast surgery. Please try to read this booklet before your next appointment at The Christie. It is also important that your family and friends feel well-informed and understand what is happening. This can make it easier for them to help you. If you do have one with you, you may need to turn it off.

Not all the information in here may apply to the type of treatment you are having. This will be discussed when you have your first meeting with a member of The Christie radiotherapy team.

What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy uses exact, carefully measured doses of radiation to treat the area specified by the specialist doctor called a clinical oncologist. It is given by therapy radiographers who operate the treatment machine called a linear accelerator (linac for short). The machines direct high-energy rays to the precise area needing treatment. The radiographers will be able to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Please note:

Mobile phones can interfere with the treatment equipment. Please look out for signs letting you know if it is safe to use your mobile phone. If you do have one with you, you may need to turn it off.
Radiotherapy works by targeting the cells in the treatment area. If radiation hits a cell that is dividing, the cell will be damaged. Cancer cells are much less able than normal cells to repair the damage, so more of the cancer cells will be destroyed. The normal cells can recover. Although surgery will have removed all the visible cancer cells, there is a small risk that some remain and the radiotherapy should destroy these cancer cells.

If you have had surgery to remove part of the breast, radiation is usually advised for the surrounding breast tissue, to destroy any possible remaining cancer cells. If you have had a mastectomy, it is sometimes advised to the chest wall. The area treated may also include some small glands called lymph nodes that lie behind your clavicle (collar bone) or in the armpit.

The aim of treatment following surgery is to reduce the chances of cancer coming back in the breast or chest wall and can improve survival.

**When will radiotherapy begin?**

Before your course of radiotherapy can begin, it is important for the scar from your surgery to be healed. The treatment can sometimes be planned before it has healed completely, but the treatment itself may be delayed slightly. You will have an appointment with a Christie doctor or nurse clinician to discuss the type of radiotherapy you need before you attend for treatment planning. This may take place at your local hospital or The Christie.

Your first visit to the radiotherapy department will be for planning your treatment. The Christie gives radiotherapy treatment at our main Withington site and at radiotherapy centres at Oldham and Salford.
The treatment usually begins one – two weeks after the planning visit, although some simpler radiotherapy treatments may start as soon as the following day.

You will have 15 treatments and possibly some additional ‘boost’ treatments, depending on your age and factors relating to your surgery. Please note, treatment never starts on a Monday.

**Agreeing to treatment**

### Consent to treatment

We will ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to accept the treatment that you are being offered. The basis of the agreement is that you have had The Christie’s written description of the proposed treatment and that you have been given an opportunity to discuss any concerns. You are entitled to request a second opinion from another doctor who specialises in treating this cancer. You can ask your own consultant or your GP to refer you. Your consent may be withdrawn at any time before or during this treatment. Should you decide to withdraw your consent then a member of your treating team will discuss the possible consequences with you.

Radiation can be harmful to an unborn child. It is important to let the radiographers know if you have missed a period, or suspect that you might be pregnant before you are exposed to any radiation.

### Are there any alternatives to this treatment?

The doctor at your local hospital may have advised you about any other possible treatments before referring you to The Christie. Your consultant at The Christie will be happy to discuss any concerns you may still have.
What will happen if I do not have this treatment?

There is an increased risk that your cancer may return in the breast or chest wall (if you have had a mastectomy). The radiotherapy reduces this risk. You can discuss this with your doctor.

Planning the treatment (marking up)

A therapy radiographer will explain to you exactly what is going to happen. **You will not have any treatment on your first day in the radiotherapy department.**

Treatment planning (marking up) will be done on a CT scanner. The scans which are undertaken to plan your radiotherapy are solely aimed to give enough information to plan the radiotherapy accurately. These scans are not diagnostic and therefore do not give sufficient information to assess the status of your cancer or any other abnormalities.

The radiographer will ask you to remove all your clothes above your waist and give you a special breast gown to keep and bring with you during your treatment. Please return this on the last treatment day. The radiographer will help you on to the treatment couch for you to lie on
your back on a special inclined board. We will help to make you as comfortable as possible although the board is very hard. Your arm will be raised above your head and supported on a special arm rest. You will need to lie still and breathe normally. This is the position you will be in for your treatment. Some patients may be asked to return for another planning scan with breath holding.

During the planning session the radiographers or doctor will draw marks on your chest with a skin pen. The pen marks may rub off a little onto your clothes. Do not worry if they do – they will wash out – but it might be sensible to wear older underwear.

The radiographers work in a team and will be in and out of the room as they take the scans, possibly making adjustments to your position or the equipment. It is important you try to ignore what they are doing and maintain your position until the end of the planning session. If you cannot maintain that position, please tell the radiographers. It is more important that you are comfortable, so that you can stay very still during your scan and your subsequent treatments.

Once the planned area has been chosen, we need to make some permanent skin dots called a tattoo as the pen marks will wash off. This is done using a very small pin needle and some black tattoo ink. These may hurt a little, but only take seconds to do. It is important we have a permanent record of the treatment to ensure accuracy. If we are treating your breast or chest wall it will usually be two dots. If we are treating your lymph nodes it will usually be three dots.

The marking up process may take some time, so be prepared to be in the department for up to two hours. There may be other patients being marked up, so there may be some waiting. Once all the preparation has been completed, the radiographers will give you clear instructions and tell you when to come for your first treatment.
What happens during treatment?

On the day of your first treatment, the radiographers discuss the treatment and how to minimise the associated side effects. They will also check that you are still happy to go ahead with treatment. This is the time to ask any remaining questions or discuss any concerns you may have, even if they seem like silly questions. The radiographers will have the details of your treatment which the doctor and planning team have carefully planned.

You will be asked to change into your gown before your treatment, to wear when you are in the treatment room. If you are asked to sit in the waiting area in your gown, and you do not feel comfortable about this, please tell a member of staff or bring something to wear on top of it (jacket, cardigan or shawl).

While you are on the treatment couch, the radiographer will adjust your breast gown so that only the treatment area is exposed. The radiographers will then position you, the treatment couch and the linac (radiotherapy machine) until they are all in the correct position. This is to line up the marks already put on your skin at marking up.

Parts of the linac may come close to you and even touch you, but at no time will you feel any pain or pressure. The linac is large and you may find it a little frightening to begin with. When all the adjustments have been made and you are in exactly the right position, the radiographers will make sure you are comfortable and then leave the room to switch the machine on. Please do not feel isolated: a closed circuit television on the control desk gives the radiographers a clear view of you and they will be watching you all the time. The treatment only lasts a few minutes.
There is nothing to feel and nothing to see during treatment. The linac makes a buzzing noise when it is giving treatment. If you feel you need to change your position, the radiographers will tell you beforehand how to let them know this. They will switch off the linac and come in immediately. Please check your appointment time for the following day before you leave in case of any changes.

Can I expect any side effects?

The side effects of radiotherapy occur in two stages:

1. Early reactions
   These are reactions which usually start in the second week of treatment and gradually worsen, peaking about two weeks after finishing treatment. They then gradually improve thereafter.

2. Late reactions
   It is possible for reactions or changes to occur long after the treatment has finished (months or years).
Not everyone will have all the side effects listed here. These depend on the type of treatment and everyone reacts in differing degrees to the treatment. The side effects of radiotherapy are limited to the area of the body being treated, apart from lethargy.

**Early reactions**

**Skin reactions**

You will notice very gradual changes. The reaction usually starts in the second week. Your skin in the treated area becomes pink (similar looking to sunburn) or darker (if you have darker skin), and may feel itchy and sore. This may worsen one – two weeks after radiotherapy completes and your skin may begin to blister, break down and weep. Here are some things you can do to help:

**Showering and bathing**

Wash the treated area with warm water and a mild soap or shower gel and then pat dry with a soft towel.

**Creams and lotions**

It is advisable to moisturise the skin within the treated area. Use your usual moisturising lotion to help soothe and moisturise the skin. If you do not have a moisturiser, a simple cream such as E45 is adequate. We may advise you to stop using the cream or lotion if your skin becomes blistered or broken.

**Deodorants**

You may use a deodorant unless it irritates your skin. It is best to use a deodorant that does not contain any metal compounds such as aluminium.

**Talcum powder**

Do not use talcum powder in the treated area as this may irritate your skin and have a drying effect.
Hair removal
Use an electric razor if possible. Avoid wet shaving, using wax or other hair removal creams.

Clothing
Loose natural fibre clothing such as cotton or silk may be more comfortable and prevent irritation caused by the rubbing of tight clothing.

Perfumes and aftershave
Perfumes and aftershave should not be used within the treatment area.

Swimming
Be cautious when swimming in a chlorinated pool as the water can have a drying effect on the skin. It is advisable to rinse the skin well afterwards and apply moisturiser. If the skin becomes sore or breaks down, stop swimming until the reaction has settled.

Heat or cold
Do not apply ice packs or hot water bottles to the area being treated.

Sun exposure
Cover the treatment area when exposed to the sun or in cold and windy conditions whilst on treatment, and until any reaction has settled following treatment. We recommend using a total sun block for at least a year after treatment.

Tape and dressings
Do not use adhesive tape or dressings on the treated area unless advised by your specialist team.

There is more information in our leaflet ‘Skin care during and after your radiotherapy treatment’. Please ask your radiographer for a copy or visit the cancer information centre.
Some people have a more severe reaction, such as skin peeling, cracking or blistering. We advise you stop using all cream in the area that skin has broken, and use a foam, non-adhesive dressing to absorb any fluid, and reduce friction. This is more likely to happen if you have large breasts. Contact the radiotherapy team or your breast care nurse who will advise you about appropriate dressings, and make an appointment for you to be seen if necessary.

You should take extra care of your skin during the treatment as long as the reaction lasts.

**Tiredness**

Tiredness can be a general side effect of treatment and travelling for treatment every day. A small number of people describe feelings of extreme fatigue but most patients are able to continue normal routines, and some continue to work and carry out busy lives as normal. This can vary between individuals.

People who have had chemotherapy before radiotherapy may notice the tiredness earlier because of the lasting side effects from the chemotherapy.

It is a good rule of thumb to listen to what your body is telling you, and if you feel tired then rest. Try to maintain a normal sleeping routine. For people in good general health, it may be beneficial to do some gentle exercise such as walking. There is a booklet and DVD about exercise which you may find helpful. Please ask a radiographer for a copy.

Your tiredness should start to gradually improve a couple of weeks after completing your radiotherapy.
What can I do around the house?
If tiredness is a problem, it is wise to take your time when doing jobs around the house and to follow that by periods of rest. If someone else can do the chores for a few weeks, this would help to speed your long-term recovery.

When can I return to work?
This largely depends on the type of work you are doing and individual circumstances. Discuss this with your doctor at an early opportunity and work out a plan for return, perhaps part-time, to begin with.

Hair loss in armpit (if you are having treatment to the axillary (armpit) lymph node area)
Radiotherapy only causes hair loss in the treated area. The sweat glands may also stop working for a while so perspiration on that side should not be a problem.

Throat reaction (if you are having treatment to the lymph nodes at the bottom of your neck)
Some people can develop a sore throat or it can feel uncomfortable when swallowing for a short time towards the end or just after treatment. We do our best to shield as much of the throat as possible. This does not usually last for more than a week. If this happens, we will give you a paracetamol mixture (to take before main meals). Take this for as long as the symptoms last.

You can also help:

■ by drinking plenty of fluids
■ if it is uncomfortable when you swallow, eat soft but moist foods: More information is available in our booklet ‘Eating well for breast cancer’.


**Stiffness of joints and muscles** (from holding the treatment position or if you are having treatment close to the shoulder, treating the nodes)

Your shoulder can become stiff or uncomfortable if you have had lymph glands removed or may already be stiff since surgery. This can sometimes occur when treatment has finished. You may not think you have a problem with movement now, but doing some specific exercises during your radiotherapy treatment will help to prevent or minimise stiffness or discomfort. The exercises are different from those given to you following surgery and are taught by a physiotherapist in a class setting.

The radiographers will give you information about the classes on your first visit. If you are having treatment at The Christie at Withington, you can telephone the physiotherapists on **0161 446 3795** to book a class. If you are having radiotherapy at The Christie at Oldham or Salford, you will automatically be booked into one of the exercise classes during the course of radiotherapy treatment. **We strongly recommend that you join a class as near to the beginning of your treatment as possible.** It is a good idea to continue with the exercises at home for several months after the treatment has ended to prevent any muscle stiffness.

**Swelling of the breast** (if you have had a lumpectomy)

You may notice a change to the size or shape of the breast. Some women say that the breast feels different and has changed in texture. At first, the breast may seem a little swollen (oedema). This should settle once treatment has finished, but might take a month or more to do so. Women with large breasts have a greater tendency to changes in breast size.
Pain

Some women have discomfort, pain (shooting pain or dull pain) or tenderness in the treated area, in the breast, or under the arm. Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen can often relieve this. If not ask your Christie doctor for further advice.

Late or permanent reactions

It is possible for reactions or changes to occur long after the treatment has finished, although this is less common these days because of improvements to treatment techniques over the years. In some cases, discomfort can persist after treatment.

- You may have changes to the colour of your skin in the treated area. This is particularly likely if you are dark skinned.
- Several months after radiotherapy, some women may notice that their treated breast continues to feel firmer to touch.
- Occasionally, your breast might also change in size or shape. The change can be permanent, but is usually only slight. Please contact your breast care nurse if you are worried about this.
- The scar may remain tender or sensitive for some time following surgery and radiotherapy.
- Tiny permanent red spider marks may appear on your skin in the treated area several years after treatment. These are called telangiectasia and do not affect your general health.
- Localised tenderness can occur over the ribs within the treated area, sometimes causing a weakening in the bone, and very rarely a rib fracture. This can be uncomfortable but will gradually improve.
As we may treat through a small amount of lung, in some cases this can cause scarring. It is highly unlikely to cause symptoms.

If the left breast or chest wall is being treated, there is some evidence with older radiotherapy techniques that there could be an increased risk of heart problems following radiotherapy. With modern and improved techniques and equipment, we minimise the radiation dose to the heart, thereby reducing the risk to your heart.

Using radiotherapy or chemotherapy to treat cancer carries a very small risk of causing a secondary cancer in the body. The risk is small (about 1 in 1000) and is greatest 10–20 years after treatment.

The muscles in the shoulder and treated area can become stiff again. If this happens please contact the physiotherapy department on 0161 446 3795 for further advice.

Please discuss your individual risk of lymphoedema (swelling in the body’s tissues) with your Christie doctor. Lymphoedema can occur as a result of surgery and/or radiotherapy to the armpit. Some patients notice a slight swelling of the arm or hand, and in a small number of cases it can be more severe (and can occur many years later). The physiotherapy class discussed on the previous page gives advice regarding reducing the risk of lymphoedema, as well as stretching exercises. Please tell your breast care nurse or doctor if you develop any swelling or are concerned about this, as you may need a referral to a specialist.
**Emotional support**

You may feel low or depressed, and mood swings can occur from time to time. Sometimes these feelings can come out of the blue, during, or even after treatment. Do not feel you are alone at this time. Ask to speak to someone on the radiotherapy team (doctor or radiographer), or contact your breast care nurse. Coming to terms with breast cancer can be traumatic, so don’t be afraid to ask for help. There are complementary therapy drop-in sessions including massage, reflexology and relaxation classes at The Christie at Withington, Oldham and Salford. Please ask a member of staff about the dates and times of these services.

**Breast care nurses support**

Your local breast care nurse will remain your point of contact and source of advice for ongoing care. For contact details, see page 23.

**Local support services**

To find out what support (complementary therapies, counselling, support groups etc.) is available locally, contact your local breast care nurse, or visit the cancer information centre at Withington, Oldham or Salford.
Some questions you may have...

**Will it hurt?**
No. You will feel no pain at all while you are actually having your treatment.

**Is it safe?**
Radiation used in medical treatment is given in controlled, carefully measured doses. The aim is to include all tissues that could possibly include cancer cells while minimising the dose to the normal tissue. No x-rays are given outside of the treatment area.

**Will I be radioactive?**
No. Patients treated by x-rays do not become radioactive. The radiation does not stay in your body after treatment, so you cannot do anyone else any harm. It is safe for you to mix with other people.

**I already have problems with my health. Will the radiotherapy treatment make them worse?**
Not usually. The treatment may make you feel more tired than normal. Please tell your treatment team about any existing medical conditions. Ask your Christie doctor if you are worried about any other health problems.

**Can I come for treatment at any time of the day?**
Please discuss treatment times with the radiotherapy department support workers on the machine (blue uniform). The radiographers will give you an appointment time for the first treatment when you attend for your planning session (this is usually an afternoon appointment to ensure your plan is ready).

Please try and be as flexible as possible and give priority to your treatment sessions over other general appointments. The time you prefer may not be available at the start of your treatment because of the large patient numbers being
treated. If you need a specific time with valid reasons, please give the radiographers at least 48 hours notice. The time we give you may vary half an hour each way due to emergencies and so on. Please check your appointment time for the following day before you leave, in case of any changes.

When will my treatment be reviewed?

Appointments will be made for you to see a member of your review team – this could be a doctor, a specialist nurse or radiographer – to review your treatment and any side effects. We will take you to the clinic before or after your radiotherapy. We will give you a morning or afternoon appointment to fit in with your consultant’s clinic.

What happens if I need ambulance transport to and from the hospital?

Many patients are able to bring themselves or can ask a friend or relative to help them out. If you think you may need ambulance transport, please discuss this with a radiotherapy support worker or radiographer on your first visit to the radiotherapy department. Ambulance transport can be arranged subject to an eligibility criteria based on medical need. There also needs to be a medical need for you to bring an escort on hospital transport.

There can be delays for some time either side of your appointment because of the high demand for transport. Please take this into account when you are deciding whether to use ambulance transport or not.

Hospital transport is provided by North West Ambulance Service and West Midlands Ambulance Service. Contact the transport liaison office at The Christie directly on 0161 446 8114 or 8143 for advice and bookings (Monday–Friday, 8.00am–6.00pm). Patients attending The Christie at Salford can contact 0161 918 7800 and patients attending The Christie at Oldham can contact 0161 918 7700 for advice about transport.
After treatment ends – follow up

You will either make a radiotherapy follow-up appointment on your last treatment day, or this will be sent in the post, depending on where your follow-up is held. This is normally about six to twelve weeks after your treatment has ended. This is to check you have recovered from the treatment. You will not usually have any x-rays or scans. You will be told when your next follow up is after this.

If you have any problems after radiotherapy finishes related to side effects of the treatment please contact the radiotherapy department, The Christie Hotline on 0161 446 3658, your breast care nurse, or the secretary of your Christie doctor via the switchboard on 0161 446 3000.

If you change your address, please let the health records department know your new address, and the address of your new GP, on 0161 446 3346 or 3347.

**If your follow-up appointment is inconvenient**, please contact the hospital on the number on your appointment letter.

Prescriptions

From 1 April 2009 NHS patients treated for cancer became entitled to free prescriptions. Prescriptions from The Christie pharmacy are free for NHS patients. You will need an exemption certificate to get free prescriptions from a community pharmacy. Application forms are available from the pharmacy at The Christie and from your GP.

Car parking

The Christie at Oldham and Salford have designated areas for free parking for radiotherapy patients whilst on treatment. It is accessible by code entry that is provided at your first appointment within the unit.
For parking at the main Withington site, please check the website (www.christie.nhs.uk) for the latest details, or ask at the information centre for a copy of the leaflet ‘Travelling and car parking for patients and patient’s visitors to The Christie’.

Where can I find further information and support?

**Breast Cancer Care**

5–13 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0NS
Helpline: freephone 0808 800 6000
www.breastcancercare.org.uk

- free help, information and support to women with breast cancer as well as their families, partners and friends
- a prosthesis fitting service
- a nationwide volunteer service which can put you in contact with women who have been through treatment for breast cancer already. The volunteers can offer emotional support and put you in touch with a local support group

**Macmillan Cancer Support**

This is a national cancer information charity which runs a cancer information service. The cancer support service freephone number is 0808 808 0000 (Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm). If you are hard of hearing, use the textphone 0808 808 0121. If you are a non-English speaker, interpreters are available. Information and advice about finance and benefits are also available.

Macmillan Cancer Support also publish booklets which are free to patients, their families and carers. You can get a copy by ringing the freephone number. The information is on their website: www.macmillan.org.uk
Booklets include:
- Specific cancers, for example, breast, secondary breast and breast reconstruction
- ‘Understanding radiotherapy’ and ‘Understanding chemotherapy’

Booklets on living with cancer – some of these are listed below:
- Talking about your cancer
- Talking to children and teenagers when an adult has cancer
- Coping with hair loss
- Cancer and complementary therapies
- Travel and cancer
- Coping with fatigue
- Cancer and emotions

The cancer information centres offer information, advice and support. The centres have a full range of booklets free to patients and their relatives or carers. There are information centres at The Christie at Withington, Salford and Oldham.

Christie information

The Christie produces a range of patient information booklets and DVDs, some of these are listed below:
- **DVDs on radiotherapy**
  You can borrow a DVD to watch at home. Ask on the ward or the staff in outpatients or radiotherapy.
- **Where to get help: services for people with cancer**
  Discusses sources of help when you have cancer, where to go for financial help, and cancer support groups.
- **Eating well for breast cancer**
  For people who may be gaining weight as a result of
treatment: offers some useful advice on diet. There is also information on how to cope with side effects of treatment.

- **Be Active, Stay Active: a guide for exercising during and after treatment for cancer**
  A booklet and DVD with a simple exercise programme you can follow. There is also more information about coping with fatigue and the benefits of exercise. Available with subtitles and in Urdu and Chinese.

- **Smoking cessation**
  This leaflet gives details of helpful services for people who wish to stop smoking.

The booklets are free to patients coming to The Christie. If you would like a copy, please ask the ward staff. If you are an outpatient please ask your nurse, doctor or radiographer.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

**Benefits and finance**

You may have had to stop work and had a reduction in your income. You may be able to get benefits or other financial help.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a social security benefit and has replaced Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for new claimants. It’s for people who need help either because of their disability or their illness. You can apply if you are aged 16–64.

People aged 65 or over who need help with personal care or supervision could be entitled to Attendance Allowance.
Your carer could get Carer’s Allowance if you have substantial caring needs.

Find out more:

- To get a claim pack for Attendance Allowance, call 0345 605 6055 and for PIP call 0800 917 2222.
- For DLA: If you were born on or before 8 April 1948 call 0345 605 6055, if you were born after 8 April 1948 call 0345 712 3456.
- Carer’s Allowance: call 0345 608 4321.
- For benefits advice, contact Maggie’s centre on 0161 641 4848 or email manchester@maggiescentres.org. The Christie at Oldham has a benefits advice session on Thursday afternoons, call 0161 918 7745.
- Contact your local social services department for help with equipment and adaptations, or for an assessment of care needs. Visit www.gov.uk for further information.
- Macmillan Cancer Support can give advice on helping with the cost of cancer on 0808 808 00 00 or www.macmillan.org.uk

Useful contacts

The Christie at Withington – 0161 446 3000
The Christie radiotherapy department – 0161 446 3485
The Christie physiotherapy department – 0161 446 3795
The Christie health records – 0161 446 3346 or 3347
The Christie at Oldham – 0161 918 7700
The Christie at Salford – 0161 918 7800
Breast care nurses in the North West

Bolton – 01204 390494
Crewe – 01270 612130
The Christie – 0161 446 3996 / Switch 0161 446 3000
Macclesfield – 01625 663079
North Manchester – 0161 720 2558 / Switch 0161 795 4567
Oldham & Rochdale – 0161 627 8459 / Switch 0161 624 0420
Salford – 0161 206 1173/5676 / Switch 0161 789 7373
Stockport – 0161 419 5665/4752 / Switch 0161 483 1010
Tameside – 0161 922 6658/6088/6685 / Switch 0161 922 6000
Wigan – 01942 774720 / Switch 01942 244000
University Hospital South Manchester (Wythenshawe) and Trafford – 0161 291 3113 / Switch 0161 998 7070

Student training

The Christie is a training hospital for postgraduate and undergraduate trainees, so you may meet male and female students in all areas of the hospital. We train doctors, nurses, radiographers and other therapists in the treatment and care of cancer patients. Placements at The Christie are an important part of student training, so by allowing them to assist in your care, you will be making a valuable contribution to student education.

Students are always supervised by fully qualified staff. However, you have the right to decide if students can take part in your care. If you prefer them not to, please tell the doctor, nurse, radiographer or other therapist in charge as soon as possible. You have a right to do this and your treatment will not be affected in any way. We also try to respect the concerns of patients in relation to the gender of their doctor and other health professionals.
Do you have private medical insurance or are you considering funding treatment yourself?

Patients with private medical insurance or those who choose to self-pay for their care can access a full range of treatment at The Christie Clinic. This includes initial consultation, diagnostics, surgical, chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatments in one place. The Christie Clinic is a joint partnership between The Christie NHS Foundation Trust and HCA Healthcare UK. The partnership means that a share of the profit from The Christie Clinic is invested back into the NHS for the development of care and future service enhancement, therefore benefiting all patients.

We value our patients as individuals so care is tailored to provide the best possible clinical outcomes. We work with a number of expert consultants who lead this tailored care plan. We operate a consultant lead service and so your named consultant will be in charge of your care for the duration of your treatment.

If you wish to use your private medical insurance or pay for your treatment yourself there are three simple steps:

1) **Check your insurance cover.** In some instances your insurance company may suggest that you have your care and/or some aspects of your treatment on the NHS, but it is your choice to use your private medical insurance if you wish to do so. If you are being treated in the NHS and you choose to exercise your private medical insurance or wish to pay privately, you may of course do this, but your consultant would guide you as to the best clinical option.
2) **Make an appointment.** There are no waiting lists at The Christie Clinic and appointments can be easily scheduled to suit you.

3) **For more information or advice:**

- Speak to your consultant about continuing your treatment as a private patient
- Call us on **0161 918 7296** if you have any queries about accessing our services. You can also use this number for a quotation if you are paying for treatment, as we offer fixed prices for some treatments and if you have private medical insurance and wish to clarify any points.
- Email us: **info.christieclinic@hcahealthcare.co.uk**
- Visit our website: **www.thechristieclinic.co.uk**

We care for patients at all stages of illness and treatment if you wish to consider private treatment.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence.

If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**
Contact The Christie Hotline for urgent support and specialist advice

The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Visit the Cancer Information Centre:
The Christie at Withington Tel: 0161 446 8100
The Christie at Oldham Tel: 0161 918 7745
The Christie at Salford Tel: 0161 918 7804
Open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.
Opening times can vary, please ring to check before making a special journey.

The Christie NHS Foundation Trust
Wilmslow Road
Manchester M20 4BX
T. 0161 446 3000
www.christie.nhs.uk

The Christie Patient Information Service
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