

Department of radiotherapy

Concurrent radiotherapy and chemotherapy for sarcoma

(Chemotherapy and radiotherapy given together at the same time)

Introduction

You will have been given a leaflet about your chemotherapy and a booklet about your radiotherapy in your anatomical site. The radiotherapy booklet may not be written specifically with sarcoma in mind.

Why are radiotherapy and chemotherapy used together for some sarcomas?

Radiotherapy is used with chemotherapy for two main reasons:

1. To reduce the number of cancer cells, which could be circulating around your body.
2. To shrink your cancer prior to radiotherapy.

The likelihood is that you will have started your chemotherapy and that radiotherapy will be advised at a later date.

Interactions

Some of the chemotherapy drugs used in different sarcoma chemotherapy regimes may interact with radiotherapy; for example: Actinomycin D, Gemcitabine, and Doxorubicin.

Some of these drugs may not be given before, during or after the radiotherapy for a few weeks. This decision will be made by your oncologist.

Chemotherapy can sometimes increase the risk of your skin becoming inflamed during radiotherapy (called a skin reaction). It can also cause skin reactions to reactivate at a future date during your chemotherapy regime post radiotherapy.

There may be other chemotherapy and radiotherapy interactions depending on the area being irradiated, for example: ifosfamide and the bladder. Your radiotherapy and chemotherapy will be carefully chosen, bearing in mind the area being irradiated.

Radiation is associated with a predictable skin reaction. Please show any rashes to the treatment radiographers. You may need an extra review by the clinical oncology doctors or nurses.

Chemotherapy side effects

You will still be at risk of infection (neutropenic sepsis) whilst on chemotherapy and radiotherapy. You will still need to monitor your temperature and ring The Christie Hotline as advised by your medical oncologist.



Appointments

You will get daily appointments for your radiotherapy, which allocates you a timed slot. Please let your radiographers know when you are due to be admitted for chemotherapy as they may need to reorganise the timing of your radiotherapy treatment.

If you are admitted to another hospital during your course of radiation treatment you must ensure that the radiotherapy department is informed as soon as possible to avoid any breaks in treatment.

If you have been provided with accommodation in Manchester because you are an out of area patient having proton beam therapy treatment, it is strongly advised that you stay in Manchester at the weekend. This is to ensure that should you become unwell and need to be admitted to a hospital, we can still arrange for you to have daily treatment where possible and avoid any gaps in treatment.

During radiotherapy the appointments for admission for chemotherapy are provisional and depend on bed availability so sometimes may be a day or so after the proposed date. You will be informed by your team about this.

As well as a regular chemotherapy review appointment with a member of your medical oncology team (chemotherapy doctors and nurses), you will also have weekly reviews of your irradiated site by a member of your clinical oncology team (radiotherapy doctors and nurses). **It is important that you attend both these clinic appointments.**

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.

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

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.

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

