

**Patient  
 Information**

# Prophylactic Cranial Irradiation (PCI)

**Prophylactic** – preventative    **Cranial** – head  
**Irradiation** – radiotherapy

## Introduction

Your oncologist has recommended that you have a course of radiotherapy. This information leaflet aims to tell you about radiotherapy and what will happen.

Please be aware that radiotherapy centres are training centres for doctors, nurses and radiographers. Students may be present in the department but they are supervised at all times. If you would prefer not to have students present during your treatment please let a member of staff know.

You may find it useful to write down some questions before you start your treatment. A space is provided towards the back of this leaflet for you to do so.

## Treatment planning appointment



A shell or mask will be made to help you keep your head still during treatment. You will be placed in the treatment position, usually on your back, with your arms by your sides. If you find this uncomfortable, please do not hesitate to tell one of the team as they may be able to change your position.

The plastic sheet of material used to make your mask will have been warmed in a water bath, so it becomes very flexible. It will then be laid across your face and neck and gently pressed into position around your facial features.

Reference No.

GHPI1687\_10\_21

Department

Radiotherapy

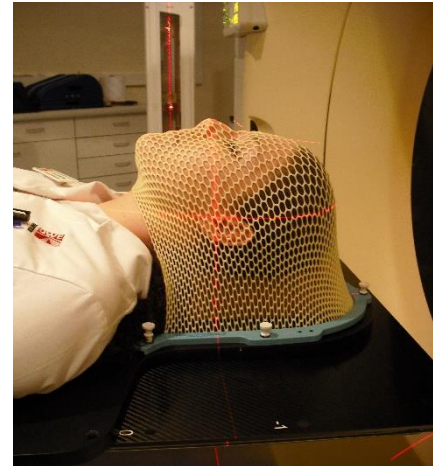
Review due

October 2024

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The plastic will feel warm and damp against your skin, but it should not feel uncomfortable. Your mouth and nose will be covered but you will be able to breathe normally through the holes in the plastic.

A well-fitting shell can be difficult to make if you have long hair, a beard or a moustache, so you may be asked to tie your hair back. You may also be asked to shave any facial hair before your planning appointment.



Once the shell or mask has been made, you will then have a CT scan while wearing the shell. This scan is used to plan your treatment accurately.

## Radiotherapy treatment

A course of treatment may last from 1 to 2 weeks. At each treatment session, you will wear the mask and the radiographers will position you on the treatment couch in the same position that you were lying during your CT scan.

It is important for you to stay relaxed and still but breathe normally. The radiographers will leave the room to switch on the machine. You will only be alone for a few moments at a time. The radiographers will be watching you on a closed circuit TV monitor. If you urgently need the radiographers you can raise your hand to alert them and they can stop the treatment machine and be with you in seconds.

## Possible side effects

- Headaches
- Hair loss
- Sickness
- Tiredness (Fatigue)
- Loss of appetite
- Skin reaction

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## Questions

Please use this space to write down any questions you have, to help you remember to ask them at your first radiotherapy appointment.

## Further information

Please see Roy Castle Lung Foundation booklet 'Radiotherapy for lung cancer' for further information.

Website: <https://roycastle.org/help-and-support/lung-cancer-information/>



Content reviewed: October 2021