



East Suffolk and
North Essex
NHS Foundation Trust

Superficial radiotherapy for benign (non-cancerous) conditions

Dupuytren's contracture and plantar fasciitis

***Radiotherapy Department
Colchester Hospital
Tel: 01206 745055***



Welcome to the Radiotherapy Department

Your oncologist (a doctor who specialises in treating cancer and, in your case, the non-cancerous conditions Dupuytren's contracture or plantar fasciitis) will have discussed with you why radiotherapy has been recommended and given you some idea of what the treatment involves.

This booklet will give you additional general information and help to answer some of the most commonly asked questions. If you need further information, please ask us – we will be happy to help.

General information and arrival

The main entrance to the Radiotherapy Department is behind Gainsborough Wing (diagonally opposite the Constable Wing entrance). Alternatively you may use the main front entrance to the hospital and follow signs to the Radiotherapy Department.

Coming to the department – by car

Patients undergoing radiotherapy treatment do not have to pay to park at the hospital. There is a car park designated for Radiotherapy patients beside the Radiotherapy main entrance behind Gainsborough Wing. You will be given information about entry to this car park when you are informed about your first radiotherapy appointment.

Coming to the department – by train or bus

The nearest train station is Colchester Main Station which is about a mile away from Colchester Hospital. There is a frequent bus service from the station to the hospital.
Bus Traveline: 0871 200 22 33.



'Colchester Park and Ride' buses also stop outside the hospital. It is located opposite Weston Homes Stadium (J28 of the A12) and the buses run from 7am, Monday to Saturday. For more information go to www.essexhighways.org or call 0345 743 0430.

Hospital transport

Hospital transport can only be booked if you are not well enough to make your own way, or you have no alternative means of private or public transport available.

Important!

If you use hospital transport, you should be prepared to be away from home for at least four hours. Therefore, if you take regular medication or are diabetic please make sure you have what you need with you when you come.

Children

Please be aware that the hospital does not have a child-minding service. Children who cannot be left unattended cannot be looked after by departmental staff.



What is superficial radiotherapy?

Superficial radiotherapy is the use of exact, and precisely measured, doses of radiation. The treatment machine produces low energy X-rays which are directed at the site to be treated.

What is Dupuytren's contracture?

Dupuytren's is a benign, slowly progressive condition of unknown origin in which normal tissue in the hands becomes thickened and shortened. This causes ridges in the palm and stiff fingers that may in time bend towards the palm and cannot be straightened.

Treatment

The aim of the treatment is to soften the abnormal tissue to prevent or slow the progression of contractures and to preserve or restore hand function.

What is plantar fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is inflammation of the plantar fascia which is a strong band of tissue (like a ligament) that stretches from the heel to the middle foot bones. It supports the arch of the foot and also acts as a shock-absorber. Plantar fasciitis is a benign (non-cancerous) condition.

Treatment

The aim of treatment is to reduce the inflammation in the plantar fascia and relieve pain.



Your first visit to the Radiotherapy Department

When you come for your first visit to the Radiotherapy Department, we will plan treatment specifically for you. This will be done by your oncologist and a specialist radiographer. We will then ask you to sign a consent form to say that you agree to have radiotherapy.

Planning your treatment

During the planning stage, the area to be treated will be drawn onto your skin in ink. These marks will act as a guide so that the X-rays can be directed accurately. Once the marks have been drawn, a photograph will be taken for our records. This means you will not have to retain the ink marks and ensures the area is treated accurately each time. We will also make a thin metal shield to protect the normal surrounding tissue.

When will I start my treatment?

Before you leave, we will give you a list of appointments for all your treatments.

What happens when I come for treatment?

Your treatment will be carried out by a team of radiographers. The department also trains student radiographers who work alongside our staff under supervision. On the first day of your treatment, the radiographers will explain what is going to happen and will take you into the treatment room. The radiotherapy treatment is completely painless.

Dupuytren's contracture

The radiographers will ask you to sit in a chair and position your hand on the treatment couch. Your personalised shield will be placed over your hand to protect the surrounding normal tissue.

Plantar fasciitis

The radiographers will ask you to lie on the treatment couch. Your personalised shield will be placed over the sole of your foot to protect the surrounding healthy tissue. It is important at this stage that you remain as still as you can (but you can still breathe normally!) The machine will be carefully moved into position and will rest against the shield.

The radiographers deliver the radiotherapy from outside the room so when all the adjustments have been made they will leave the room while you have your treatment. This is the only time you will be left alone.

The machine makes a noise when operating so you will know when it is switched on. The radiographers are able to see you on a closed-circuit television system and they can also hear you over an intercom. This routine will be the same every time you come for treatment until your course is completed.

How long will it take?

The treatment will take between 5 and 15 minutes. The radiographers will tell you how long your treatment will last before they leave the room.



How will I feel?

Information about specific side effects will have been discussed with you at your initial appointment with your consultant. Usually you will feel no difference in your general wellbeing while having this treatment, although there are some side effects to the area being treated to be aware of.

Side effects

- Skin at the treatment site may become red, sore, dry and possibly peel.
- Rarely, the skin may crack, weep and swell up.

In most people, these side effects usually disappear after several weeks, but in a very small percentage of people mild dryness, cracked skin or thinning or hard skin may persist in the long term.

How to look after your skin

- When washing, use warm – not hot – water (Dupuytren's – use rubber gloves when washing up etc).
- Wash with only 'Simple' soap or baby soap.
- Use a moisturising cream on the treatment site and if possible wear cotton gloves (Dupuytren's) or cotton socks (plantar fasciitis) at night after applying the cream.
- Pat your hand or foot gently to dry.
- Protect the treated skin from the sun for at least a year after treatment.



After radiotherapy

After your radiotherapy finishes you can expect an appointment with your referring consultant, or a member of the radiotherapy team. This could be 2-12 weeks after radiotherapy has finished. If you have any questions prior to this appointment you can phone the numbers given below.

Important information relating to pregnancy

We are legally obliged to ask all persons of child-bearing potential whether there is any chance of being pregnant. We also have to ask you to sign a form to confirm that you are not pregnant. If there is a possibility that you may be pregnant, you must inform a member of staff.

Risks

There is a theoretical and very low risk of developing a cancer on the site as a result of this treatment. It is important that your consultant discusses your own personal risk before you start treatment.

And finally ...

We hope this booklet has been helpful. It is not designed to answer all the questions you may have, merely to give a brief overview of the treatment. Remember, we are here to help and are more than happy to answer any further questions you may have.



Contact numbers

Macmillan Radiotherapy advanced practitioners

Tel: 01206 745025

Gulmay treatment machine operator

Tel: 01206 745006 (mornings only)

Radiotherapy nurses

Tel: 01206 745037

Radiotherapy reception

Tel: 01206 745055



Verifying your identity

When you attend hospital you will be asked to confirm your first and last names, date of birth, postcode and NHS number, if you know it, and to let us know if you have any allergies.

Your experience matters

We value your feedback. Please help us improve our services by answering a simple question, in our online survey – “Overall, how was your experience of our services?”

This survey is known as “The Friends and Family Test”.

You can either scan this QR code with a smart phone camera:



Or type the following web address into your browser:
www.esneft.nhs.uk/get-involved/your-views-matter/friends-and-family-test/

Thank you very much.



Please ask if you need this leaflet in an alternative format.

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