

# Protecting people with cancer from coronavirus when going for radiotherapy

We understand you might be worried about going to hospital for radiotherapy treatment during the coronavirus pandemic. But we want to reassure you that cancer teams are doing all they can to keep everyone safe.

Radiotherapy remains an effective treatment for many people with cancer and is an important therapy for curing cancer, as well as relieving symptoms.

Unlike some other cancer treatments, radiotherapy does not normally affect your immune system, making it one of the safest treatment options as we work around coronavirus.

Cancer centres have continued to run radiotherapy services throughout the coronavirus pandemic, where safe to do so. It is important that you continue to go for treatment when advised by your cancer team.

The safety of people with cancer and the staff looking after you is a top priority for hospitals. Cancer teams are using a range of precautions to protect you from coronavirus during your visit to the radiotherapy department.

Precautions might include:

- **Asking if you have symptoms of coronavirus** before you go for treatment, and on arrival in the department
- **Changing how to get into the radiotherapy department** so that you only move in areas of the hospital that are protected from coronavirus
- **Minimising contact in communal waiting areas** by arranging seating at least two metres apart or asking you to wait outside the department until your cancer team phones for you to go in. Relatives may have to wait outside the department
- **Your cancer team wearing personal protective equipment** such as face masks, gloves and aprons. They may also ask you to wear a face mask
- **Asking you to wash your hands** when you enter and leave the department
- **Giving shorter courses of radiotherapy where possible** and backed by good evidence. For example, many cancer centres are now giving people with breast cancer fewer radiotherapy doses (which means fewer hospital visits) thanks to the results of recent trials
- **Delaying radiotherapy for a short time** if it is safe to do so. For example, for prostate cancer, where hormone treatments can safely be used instead.

Please talk to your cancer team if you have any concerns about the risks of attending your radiotherapy appointment.

