Introduction
This information describes the skin reactions you may develop during and after your radiotherapy. It also provides advice on how you can look after your skin.

A skin reaction will only occur in the area being treated. Ask your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist where this is if you are not sure. If you have any questions that are not answered by this document, please talk to your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist.

How might my skin react to treatment?
A radiotherapy skin reaction is likely for most patients. It will not happen straight away but tends to develop gradually throughout treatment, and usually starts to settle 2–4 weeks after treatment finishes.

During the course of your radiotherapy, you may develop a skin reaction and notice your skin...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gradually Become</th>
<th>Feel Dry or</th>
<th>Develop a Rash and Feel Itchy</th>
<th>Blister or Peel</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pinker or darker depending on your skin colour</td>
<td>Tight and sore</td>
<td>This may feel worse when you get warm or hot</td>
<td>If this happens seek further advice as you may need dressings or gel</td>
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What can make my skin reaction worse?
If you develop a skin reaction during the course of your radiotherapy, a number of factors that may affect the reaction include:

01 | If you are prescribed a higher dose of radiation for your type of cancer |
02 | If you receive treatment to areas where your skin folds |
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<td>This includes the groin, breast, buttocks or armpit; these areas can be warm, moist and rub together, making the skin more sensitive</td>
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03 | If you receive treatment to the head and neck area |
| This is due to the sensitive nature of the skin and the tendency for this area to be exposed to the sun. If you are receiving treatment on your neck, you can help by covering this area with a cotton or silk scarf when you go outside |
04 | If you smoke (this can affect the oxygen levels in your skin) |
| Please ask for advice if you need help to stop or to cut down on smoking |
05 | If you have other conditions such as diabetes or heart disease |
| Please tell your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist if you have any other health conditions so that it can be noted in your records |

02 | If you receive treatment to areas where your skin folds |

Information for Patients
Radiotherapy
Skin Reactions

You may develop an exit rash
This is where the radiotherapy beam causes a reaction in the area opposite to where it goes in.

This will depend on how and where you are being treated. Talk to your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist if you see or feel anything on your skin that concerns you.
Skin care advice
Reactions to your skin cannot be prevented, however, there are things you can do to help yourself feel more comfortable

Health and well-being
It will help your overall health if you...
- keep up an intake of 6–8 glasses of water a day
- eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet

A diet that includes fruit, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein. You can ask your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist to provide examples and to explain the importance of staying hydrated and eating a healthy diet in more detail

Hygiene and moisturising

Moisturisers
01 Please continue to use the moisturiser you prefer and like to use. No specific moisturiser can be recommended for use during and after treatment as there is not sufficient evidence to support the use of one product over another
02 Use moisturiser frequently, gently smooth it onto your skin until it is absorbed. This can help to keep your skin supple
03 If you do not currently use a moisturiser, speak with your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist and they will be able to suggest a few options for you
04 You do not need to wipe your moisturiser off before receiving treatment, but please do not apply moisturiser immediately before your treatment
05 Please stop using moisturiser if it irritates your skin and talk to your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist
06 If your skin blistered or peels, stop using moisturiser in that particular area and ask your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist for more advice

'DON’Ts' for the treatment area

Please avoid...
- sun exposure and protect the area from direct sunlight
- shaving
- rubbing the area using sticky tape (such as Elastoplast™ or Micropore™)
- using wax, cream or lasers for hair removal near or close to the treated area
- using make-up
- hair dye, perfumes and aftershave on or close to the treated area

Do you have any questions?
Please talk to your radiographers and clinical nurse specialist. They are here to help you during and after your treatment

The contact details for your treatment team are:

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