

### **FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS**

Radiotherapy can cause side effects, which vary from person to person. The side effects depend on which area of the body is being treated, and the size of the radiation dose.

It is common to feel tired after the treatment.

The skin can become sore and red.

Children who receive radiotherapy directed at the head may experience hair loss, and radiotherapy to the stomach can cause nausea.

Side effects often become apparent after one to two weeks' treatment, and can last for some time after radiotherapy is completed. We follow up on the child throughout the treatment period, and the child will be scheduled with doctor's appointments regularly. Ask us if you have any questions. We will do our best, both for your child and your family.



*"My friend when she has radiotherapy" – by Synnøve, 10 yrs.*

# Hello

## **-and welcome to radiotherapy**

In this leaflet you can read a little about what radiotherapy is, and what happens during a treatment session.

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## What is radiotherapy?

During radiotherapy we use machines that make radiation beams just like the ones we use to take an ordinary x-ray image, only more powerful. The radiation is administered into the body and destroys cancer cells. In order to protect the healthy cells in your body, we give small doses of radiation several times rather than just one big dose. Typically the treatment is performed daily over several weeks. The treatment is painless and requires that you lay perfectly still whilst undergoing treatment.

*Mum, dad or another adult can come along*



*This is where you take the CT image*



*This is where we control the radiotherapy*

## The first time you're here

Accuracy is vital in order to focus your treatment to the exact point it is needed. In order to do this we will need to take a CT scan of you and we may need to draw directly onto your skin with a pen.

You will probably need to have contrast fluid in your blood before we take the CT image. So that we can give you the contrast fluid we need to put a small needle in your arm, it is a good idea to use a numbing cream before we do this, so that you don't feel the needle when it goes in. Unfortunately, we cannot use an implanted port or a Hickman catheter for contrast fluid.

In some cases it is necessary to make a mould or a mask that is used to make sure you lie in exactly the same position each time you have your treatment. The whole planning session lasts about one hour.



*This is where you have your radiotherapy*

## When you have radiotherapy

The radiotherapy machine is in a big room. You will lay on the bench in the same position each time you come. We follow the same procedure you did the first time you came to us, and we will continue that through the course of your treatment, so that the radiation is focused on the right area of your body. When everything is in position, we leave the room and start the treatment, but don't worry we are not far away.

*We can see you on a TV screen in the room next door, and we can hear you when you talk to us.*

The radiation lasts about half a minute. You will hear the machine make a little sound. As soon as the sound is over we will come back in. Sometimes we have to walk in and out a couple of times to move the bench a little while you lie perfectly still. Each treatment takes between 10 and 30 minutes.