

## HEADACHES

If you suffer headaches during the treatment, please advise the staff. You may need to take medication to relieve the headaches.

## NAUSEA

In some cases, the radiation treatment may cause nausea. If you experience nausea, medication is available to alleviate your symptoms.

The treatment may give rise to slight concentration difficulties or a decline in short term memory. The risk of epileptic seizures is also slightly increased. In order to prevent such seizures you should avoid stress, loud sounds, flashing lights and alcohol.

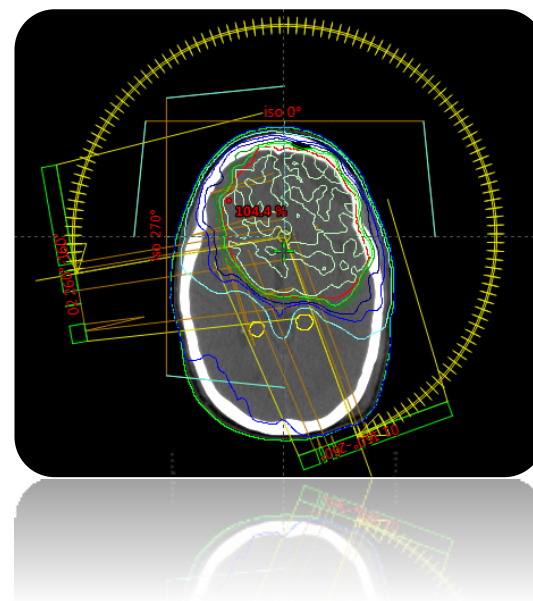
**If you experience side effects or have other questions related to your treatment, you are always welcome to ask the radiotherapy staff. You can also address these issues with your doctor during your scheduled appointments.**

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[www.helse-bergen.no/avd/kreftavdelinga](http://www.helse-bergen.no/avd/kreftavdelinga)

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# Radiotherapy to the head



### **Treatment**

Each treatment session lasts for 10 to 15 minutes. The actual radiation only lasts for one to five minutes. You will receive treatment every day, except weekends and public holidays. During the treatment period, the staff will use the treatment machine to take a special type of x-ray images. These images are not used to evaluate the effect of the treatment, but they are an important quality control to ensure that the treatment remains on target.

### **Follow-up during treatment**

During the course of treatment, you will be required to take blood samples at regular intervals. You will also be scheduled for doctor's appointments in the outpatient's clinic (Kreft Poliklinikk). During your appointments with the doctor, you can address any questions you may have regarding your illness and the treatment. If you need prescriptions or a sick leave certificate, please request this during your doctor's appointment. It can be useful to make a list of questions for the doctor prior to the appointment.

### **Smoking**

Research shows that smoking during radiotherapy reduces the effect of the radiation on the tumour. This is probably connected with the fact that the effect of radiotherapy depends on the access to oxygen in the tissue. Smoking limits oxygenation of the tumour tissue, it is therefore important that you abstain from smoking during the weeks you are undergoing radiotherapy.

If you need further information on smoking and radiotherapy, we recommend that you address this issue with your doctor.

### **Side effects from radiotherapy**

Radiotherapy can cause side effects. Side effects often become apparent one to two weeks into the treatment and will generally subside two to three weeks after completion of the radiotherapy.

Common side effects are:

#### ***FATIGUE***

Radiotherapy can make you feel faint and tired. Get plenty of rest and fresh air during treatment, and go for walks outside when possible.

A balanced and nutritious diet is important. During radiotherapy you should also drink plenty of fluids. Your body needs from 1,5 to 2 litres of fluid every day. If you are in an employment situation, you should be able to work as usual if you feel up to it.

#### ***HAIR LOSS***

Hair loss is limited to the area exposed to radiation, and will commence after one to two weeks of treatment. If you wish to purchase a wig, you should place the order in the beginning of your treatment period. The cost of a wig or other headwear is covered according to national guidelines; ask your doctor for a certificate or talk to the radiotherapy staff for more information.

Whether or not your hair will grow back at a later time, depends on the dose of radiation you have received.

Your skin may suffer irritation due to radiation, and you should use a mild shampoo when washing your hair.