

Completing your breast radiotherapy

Radiotherapy Department [Patient information](#)

This leaflet is for you now that you have finished your radiotherapy treatment. If you need a copy any of the leaflets you were given at the start, including skin care, let the radiographers know or call **0300 019 2481**.

What happens next?

Follow up appointment

Following your radiotherapy treatment, you will be followed up by the breast care team.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions, you can contact your breast care nurse or the radiotherapy department, who will be more than happy to help you.

Side effects

Radiotherapy side effects build up over time. It is normal for them to continue after your radiotherapy, and they can become worse before they get better. Usually, 2-3 weeks after finishing your treatment, your side effects will start to settle.

Skin care advice

During your radiotherapy and for a while afterwards, you may experience skin changes in the area being treated. Your skin may become pinker or darker. It may feel dry, tight, or sore. Sometimes a rash may appear and feel itchy. Continue to follow any skin care advice until your skin feels better.

It may not be possible to stop a skin reaction, but following the skin care advice will help to keep it more comfortable. If the skin becomes broken, you may need to start using a different cream, so please contact the radiotherapy department.

Reduce friction by:

- washing the skin gently in the treatment area with soap and water and patting the skin dry, avoiding rubbing the area.
- wearing loose fitting, natural fibre clothing to reduce discomfort.
- avoiding shaving and waxing in the area.

Reduce irritation by:

- using a moisturiser in the treatment area. One like E45, which is not perfumed and does not contain sodium lauryl sulphate, is better.

- stopping using your usual deodorant if the skin feels sore or is broken.
- avoiding topical antibiotics unless there is a known infection.
- avoiding direct sun exposure and use a high factor sun cream once the skin is healed.
- avoiding extremes of temperature such as heating and cooling pads.

Other advice:

- You may swim if your skin isn't broken. Shower after swimming in a pool to wash off the chlorine and apply your moisturiser. Please stop swimming if it irritates your skin.
- Smoking is likely to make your skin reaction worse. If you need help to stop, please ask for advice.

Contact details

Dorset oncology and radiotherapy advice helpline (DORAH)

General support and advice about radiotherapy Tel: **0300 019 2481**

The Dorset oncology and radiotherapy advice helpline (DORAH) is for any advice about radiotherapy treatment you have had. This is an answerphone service which is checked by radiographers regularly 8am to 5.30pm, but a message can be left at any time. The DORAH helpline is not for emergencies.

Oncology patient hotline

For urgent support Tel: **0300 019 4302**

This number can be used 24 hours a day for urgent inquiries only. If your call is not answered, please leave a message stating your name, hospital number and contact telephone number. You should be contacted by a nurse within half an hour. In the unlikely event that you are not called back within that time, **please call again.**

Breast care nurse specialists

Poole Hospital Tel: **0300 019 2861**

Royal Bournemouth Hospital Tel: **0300 019 4524**

Dorchester Hospital Tel: **01305 255160**

Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ

Telephone: **808 808 0000** (seven days a week, 8am to 8pm)

www.macmillan.org.uk

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please visit our website: **www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets**
and use the language and accessibility function available along the top of the site.

To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499**
or email **uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net**.

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