Radiation therapy to the brain
Information for patients, carers and their families

What is radiation therapy?
Radiation is a precise and localised treatment. Any related side effects will only occur within the area being treated. Each person is very much an individual so not everyone will experience the same side effects even if you are receiving similar treatments.

You will receive regular treatment reviews from your Radiation Oncologist and weekly reviews by your Nurse. If you are concerned about any aspect of your treatment, and or new problems arise between these review times please notify your Radiation Therapists and they will assist you.

Possible side effects

- Your scalp and forehead may become itchy and red during treatment.
- Some hair loss will occur after two to three weeks of treatment. Your nurse can give advice on wigs and head bandanas.
- Please inform the radiation therapists or the nurses if you experience any of the following:
  - headaches
  - nausea and vomiting
  - dizziness
  - seizures.

General advice to follow during your radiation treatment

- Shower daily, using a warm gentle flow
- Use a gentle shampoo
- Apply a small amount of aqueous cream (e.g. Sorbolene® or MooGoo® Skin Milk Udder Cream) daily to the entire treatment area. Avoid applying just before treatment.
- Do not use hair dyes or other hair products whilst on treatment, as your scalp will be very sensitive
- Do not use a hairdryer or hot iron until any scalp inflammation has settled.
- Wear a hat when outdoors.
- Maintain a well-balanced diet as good nutrition is very important for healing the ‘good’ cells in your body.
- Drink at least eight (8) cups of water a day.
- Alcohol should be limited throughout your treatment period and may interact with your medications, talk to your Radiation Oncologist if you wish to drink alcohol.
- If the radiation treatment is affecting your appetite and food/fluid intake, we can refer you to a dietitian.
- Feeling tired during treatment is normal. It is beneficial to keep up normal daily exercise and engage in moderate exercise e.g. walking. Cut work hours back if excessive tiredness occurs and have a nap as required.
- Your combination of treatment and medications may mean you are not able to drive during and after your treatment. Please check with your Radiation Oncologist for advice on this.
Smoking

You are strongly advised not to smoke. Smoking during and after treatment will reduce the chance of treatment being successful.

It will also make the reaction to radiotherapy worse and significantly increase the risk of late side effects.

Please ask for advice from any member of the team if you would like help to quit.

Further information

For further up to date evidence-based information, please refer to www.eviq.org.au

Nursing staff can be contacted 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday by phoning 5202 1111.