Radiation therapy to pelvis (female)
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
- Bladder irritations i.e. change in frequency and burning when passing urine. Your Nurse will advise you on products to help i.e. Ural® sachets or cranberry juice/capsules, and how to use them.
- Change in bowel habits i.e. frequent loose stool or constipation. Talk to your Nurse about modifying your diet, or for the recommendation of medications that will assist in managing these symptoms such as Imodium® or Lomotil®.
- Inflammation of the rectum. Please inform your Nurse if you are experiencing pain. They will advise you on appropriate management.
- Body hair in the treatment area may decrease.
- Dry, irritated or chaffed skin in treatment area.
- You may experience vaginal dryness and narrowing after treatment. Your nurse can give you some information on the use of vaginal dilators to manage this side effect after your treatment has finished.

General advice to follow during your radiation treatment
- Shower daily, using a warm gentle flow.
- Only use a mild soap (e.g. Dove® Sensitive). Pat the skin dry after your shower, do not rub the skin.
- Apply aqueous cream (e.g. Sorbolene® or MooGoo® Skin Milk Udder Cream) to the skin at night to prevent skin dryness or chaffing. Avoid applying just before treatment.
- Maintain a well-balanced diet as good nutrition is very important for healing the ‘good’ cells in your body
- Drink eight (8) cups of water a day.
- 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.

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.