

PATIENT INFORMATION

# ADVICE FOR PATIENTS REQUIRING AN EYE SHIELD FOR RADIOTHERAPY TREATMENT





**Worcestershire Oncology Centre**  
Improving cancer services in Worcestershire

## **Introduction**

Sometimes radiotherapy treatment for cancer needs to be close to the eye area. This leaflet explains the use of eye shields and how to look after your eye once the eye shield is removed after treatment.

## **Radiotherapy**

Radiotherapy uses radiation from high energy x-rays to treat cancerous cells. It works by killing the cancer cells in the treatment area but allowing the normal cells to recover. It is essential to protect the areas that do not need radiotherapy so if the treatment field is close to the eye we will use an internal eye shield each time you come, to protect the eye.

## **What is an internal eye shield?**

The eye shield is made of tungsten and is shaped like a contact lens. It is inserted under either the upper or lower eyelid and will cover the entire surface of the eye. It prevents the radiation from entering and damaging your eye.

## **But that sounds painful, will it hurt?**

No. Before inserting the eye shield, a few drops of a local anaesthetic will be put into your eye to numb it, so you will not be able to feel the eye shield. There may be a light sting when we put in the first drop but your eye will soon become numb. The radiographer will then place the eye shield into your eye.

## **How long does the eye shield remain in for?**

You will only need to wear the eye shield while you are having the treatment each day. This may last from one to several minutes. Once the radiotherapy has finished, the radiographer will gently remove the eye shield, whilst the eye is still numb, so you should not feel any pain.

### **What happens after the treatment?**

Once the daily treatment is completed and the eye shield has been removed, the radiographer will put two or three drops of a lubricant into your treated eye. You will need to wear an eye patch over the treated eye for between 2- 4 hours to protect your eye from dust until the numbness wears off. This is because during the first few hours whilst your eyes are numb, you may not feel any grit going into your eye. For that reason, we ask you to keep the eye patch on until the numbness wears off.

**You should not drive after treatment or with the eye pad on, so if you have no one to drive for you, please wait in the Oncology Centre, until the pad can be safely removed or ask about hospital transport.**

### **Possible side effects**

- Eyes may become a bit sore and watery
- The eye drops can initially cause a slight sting when first inserted.

### **Who should I phone if I still have any questions?**

#### **Worcestershire Oncology Centre–**

Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm

Radiotherapy reception: 01905 761400

For queries concerning appointments, parking and ambulance transport

#### **Cancer and Radiotherapy Information and advice**

Macmillan Radiotherapy Specialist Radiographer: 01905 761420

Monday – Friday 8.15 - 4.30

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

### **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

### **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net)**

### **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.