Having a microenema before prostate radiotherapy

Information for patients
Why do I need a microenema?

Having a microenema before your radiotherapy treatment each day, can help us make sure:

- Your treatment is accurate/given to the right area;
- Your side-effects are kept to a minimum.

If your rectum (back passage) is full when you have your radiotherapy treatment, the rectum will bulge into the treatment area. This will cause your side-effects to be worse. If you are having radiotherapy to your prostate gland a full rectum can also push it out of the treatment area. Having an empty rectum helps to avoid these problems.

It is important to tell your radiographer if you think your rectum is not empty before treatment each day.
What do I need to do?

You need to have a full bladder and an empty rectum for your planning scan and each treatment.

A microenema will help make sure your rectum is empty. You will be given a pack of microenemas at your planning scan appointment if you need to use them.

The radiographer will ask you if you have an inflammatory bowel disease, such as Crohn’s, or are allergic to any of the following ingredients:

- sodium citrate,
- sodium lauryl sulphate,
- sorbitol.
**Step 1 Using your microenema**

Your radiographer will explain how to use the microenemas and give you a pack to keep at home.

- Take an enema tube from the packet and go into the toilet. Please use the toilets off the main radiotherapy reception area to administer your microenema.

- Pull or twist the cap off the end of the nozzle.

- Squeeze a drop of liquid onto your finger and smear over the nozzle, this will help to avoid hurting your back passage.

- Gently push the full length of the nozzle into your back passage.

- Gently squeeze the tube until it is empty.

- It is very important to keep squeezing the tube as you pull the nozzle out of your back passage. This is to stop the medicine being drawn back into the tube.

- Throw the empty tube into the bin provided and wash your hands.

- Go back into the waiting room. Your enema can take from 15-45 minutes to work.

- Go back into the toilet and try to empty your bowels. Please don’t strain and don’t worry if you cannot empty your bowels or if only wind is passed – it may be that your back passage is already empty.

- If you have not emptied your bowel after 45 minutes ask the reception staff to contact a radiographer.
• Empty your bladder at the same time. If you have a catheter please ask the radiographers for a clamp and clamp it shut.

**Bring two enemas each day in case you need to use a second. Let us know when you’re running short of supplies.**

### Step 2 Filling your bladder

• When you have emptied your bowels please check in at main reception and then start drinking.

• Please drink either three cups of water or the contents of one bottle which will be **provided**.

• It will take 30 minutes for your bladder to fill up after finishing drinking.

If you find that your bladder becomes uncomfortably full, please tell the receptionist.

You may need to empty your bladder, drink and fill again. This will make treatment more accurate than if you try to *'hold on'* with an uncomfortably full bladder.
When you are on treatment please bring a spare microenema with you in case of delays.

Side-effects of microenemas

Microenemas do not usually cause any side-effects but occasionally they may cause a slight feeling of cramp. If you have been using microenemas for a long time they may cause;

- a slight burning feeling in your rectum,
- diarrhoea,
- irritation of back passage,
- can reduce the absorption of vitamins from food.

Please speak to your radiographer, nurse or doctor if you notice any of the above.

Frequently asked questions

What if there is a delay?

If you are kept waiting and the urge to empty your bladder becomes too strong please tell the receptionist. You may need to empty your bladder, drink and fill again (steps 12-14).

If it has been more than two hours since you emptied your bowels please tell the radiographers. You may need to use another microenema.
**What if I use hospital transport?**
If you are travelling by hospital or public transport and you do not feel comfortable or able to use the microenema before travelling, you may prefer to use the microenema at the hospital.

**What if I find this difficult?**
If you have trouble keeping your bladder full or using the microenema, please tell your radiographer, nurse or doctor.

**Is there anything else I can do to help my treatment?**
We recommend that you drink plenty of fluids throughout your course of treatment.

Please do not be tempted to miss meals. This will not help to keep your rectum empty.

**What if I have a question?**
If you have any questions about using the microenema, please contact the:

**Macmillan Uro-Oncology Nurse Specialist**
Tel: 0113 206 7872 Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm.

For further information about radiotherapy in general, please visit the information lounge in the radiotherapy department.