

Having a radiotherapy mask made

Information for patients



Leeds Cancer
Centre

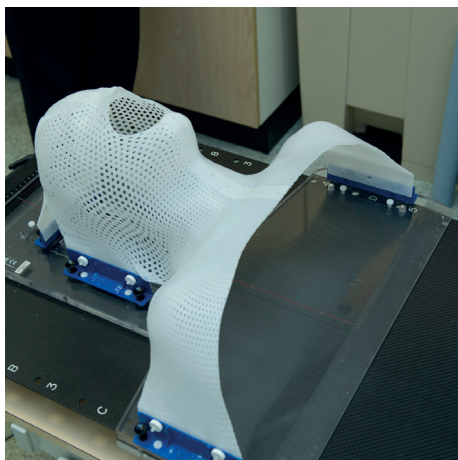
This leaflet aims to explain how your radiotherapy mask will be made.

When having treatment to the head, neck or upper chest a radiotherapy mask will help you to keep still. This is important because even small changes in the position of your chin, head or shoulders can affect the accuracy of your treatment.

Your mask will clip to the head rest which sits on the treatment couch but is not fastened to it. The marks used to position you for treatment are drawn onto the mask and not on your face or neck.

Your mask will be made from a sheet of thermoplastic mesh (shown on the front cover) or a thin sheet of clear plastic. There is a large hole so you can breathe normally during and after mask making. Eye holes may be cut out of the mask.

You will be given an appointment for the mould room before your planning scan. Please allow 30 minutes for your Mould Room appointment.



How is the thermoplastic mask made?

The mould room technicians will explain the procedure and then position you on the couch in the correct treatment position. The thermoplastic sheet is softened in a warm water bath for about three minutes.



Excess water is then removed and the mask is placed over your head and neck and gently moulded to your shape.



It will feel warm and damp, but does not hurt.



It gradually hardens and cooling gel packs are used to speed up the setting process.

The mask takes approximately 10 minutes to fully set and is then carefully removed.

How is the clear plastic mask made?

You will have two appointments in the mould room for this mask to be made.

On the first visit we will need to take an impression of your head and neck using plaster of Paris bandages. This does not hurt but it is a bit messy. The warm damp bandages are gently moulded to your shape and set in a matter of minutes. The impression is carefully removed and used by the technicians to make your custom made mask.

When you return for your second appointment, the clear plastic mask will be ready to be fitted to you.



Preparing for your appointment

- Upper clothing, including bras, may need to be removed but you will be given a gown. We suggest you wear clothing that can easily be removed for example separates.
- Dentures, wigs, hearing aids, hair grips/bobbles, earrings and necklaces will need to be removed before your mask is made.
- If you normally use denture fixative, please avoid doing so before your Mould Room appointment. Your dentures will always need to be removed, even if they are plastic.
- If you need a haircut please have this done before your mould room appointments, or leave it until after your treatment has finished. If you have a beard, we recommend you shave or give it a close trim before your mould room appointment. Once your mask is made, please keep your hair/beard the same length, otherwise your mask will not fit correctly.

What happens after the mask is made?

You may have a CT scan and /or a MRI scan, or you may be free to go home. You will wear your mask for your CT and / or MRI scan. Each scan session can take about 30 to 60 minutes, and may need to be performed on separate days. These scans help us to plan your radiotherapy treatment. You will be given your next appointment dates before you leave.

During your treatment, the mask will be carefully fitted and removed by the radiographers and kept at the hospital. If you would like to keep your mask and take it home on your last day of treatment, please ask one of the radiographers.

If you have any questions or concerns before coming, do not hesitate to contact a member of the Mould Room staff on **0113 206 8543**.

We have also made a YouTube video showing how the masks are made; the link is <https://youtu.be/zLF1o4BwbQs>

A space for your notes....

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