

## Advice on radiotherapy from patients and carers

I wish somebody had warned us that symptoms may get worse before they get better, and not to give up hope. Some of the damage may be permanent but not all of it, and some symptoms which you had before may disappear. I know of people whose seizures reduced dramatically after radiotherapy, and one man who was able to walk again after weeks of being unable to do so.

Ask for therapies to help recovery. For example speech therapy, physiotherapy and others are available through your hospital but sometimes you have to ask to get them. Be honest with your medical team and let them know how the patient really is – don't make out things are better than they are or they won't be able to assess how much help you need.

After his radiotherapy, my son's hearing became impaired and he wanted everything turned up loud - VERY loud!! We invested in a set of wireless earphones for him - to protect ourselves and our neighbours!!! That was the best thing we ever bought. Happily his hearing did recover but it was a good investment at the time.

Don't be afraid of being a 'nuisance'. If you want to know something - ask. There is no such thing as a silly question.

If nausea is a problem ice lollies seem to be better than drinks - it helps keep the fluid intake up without the effort of drinking, and if you make them from freshly squeezed fruit juices then you are also getting some vitamins.

Hospitals do not generally advertise it, but if you are visiting every day for a matter of weeks they do often offer a special rate for parking. For example, St. Georges at Tooting charged £2.00 a hour for parking but offered a rate of £10 a week if you got the ward sister to sign a special form that they give out. Ask at the ward desk for more information.

Tiredness is a side effect of radiotherapy for almost everyone. Make sure that you plan time for plenty of rest, particularly the further in to your course of radiotherapy you get. Your brain and body need time to respond as well as they possibly can to the treatment.

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Do you have some advice that we could add to this page? If so, please email us – contributions can be anonymous if you would prefer them to be.