Side effects from radiotherapy

Diagnosis and Treatment
This booklet uses easy words and pictures to help you get information about cancer.

You might want someone to help you look at the booklet so you can talk about it.

There is a Word Bank at the back of the booklet to help with hard words. Any words in bold you can find in the Word Bank.

This booklet can help you learn about cancer. But this is not the same as talking to your doctor. If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.
Side effects are things that happen because of your treatment. You may get side effects from radiotherapy. These can include:

- Feeling very tired
- Not wanting to eat and losing weight. This is called losing your appetite
Side effects from radiotherapy

- Feeling sick and being sick (vomiting)
- Thin watery poo that makes you go to the toilet a lot (diarrhoea)
- The skin where you had the treatment may get red, itchy and sore
Side effects from radiotherapy

- Your mouth can feel dry and you may find it hard to swallow.
- Your body can feel stiff and sore when you try to move.
- Your hair may fall out on the part of your body that was treated.
Side effects from radiotherapy

- You might feel different – sad, *depressed*, anxious or worried

Remember not all of these side effects may happen to you.

It is important to talk to the *radiographer* looking after you about any side effects you have. They should be able to help.
Word Bank

Drawing by Tracey Harrison
Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities
Word Bank

Appetite
This is the feeling you get when you want food.

Anxious
When a person feels very worried or nervous about something.

Diagnosis
This is finding out if you have an illness or not.
Depressed
When a person feels very sad and this sadness means day to day living is hard.

Diarrhoea
Thin watery poo that makes you go to the toilet a lot.

Radiographer
A person who takes scans and x-rays of people's bodies. They can also give people radiotherapy treatment.
Radiotherapy
This is when powerful x-rays are used to treat cancer in your body. It kills off the cancer cells.

Side effects
Things that happen because of your treatment. They may include feeling tired or sick.
Useful contacts

Drawing by Tracey Harrison
Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities
Useful contacts

Helpful organisations

Cancer Research UK
A charity that is researching treatments for cancer. Its website has lots of information about cancer.
Phone: 0808 800 4040
Web: www.cancerresearchuk.org

Macmillan Cancer Support
A charity that helps people who have cancer. They give practical, medical and financial support. They try to make cancer care in the UK better.
Phone: 0808 808 00 00
Web: www.macmillan.org.uk

NHS Contacts
These contacts give you information about your health and health services:
England and Scotland Phone: 111
Wales Phone: 0845 46 47
Northern Ireland Web: www.hscni.net

Paul’s Cancer Support Centre
Gives help, information and complementary therapies to people with cancer.
Phone: 0207 924 3924
Web: www.paulscancersupportcentre.org.uk
Useful contacts

RESPOND
Gives therapy to people with learning disabilities after trauma or abuse. They also offer training and support to carers.
Phone: 0808 808 07 00
Web: www.respond.org.uk

Written and audio material

Books Beyond Words
A series of picture books for people with learning disabilities. The books talk about cancer, health and bereavement.
Web: www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk
Phone: 020 8877 9799
Email: admin@booksbeyondwords.co.uk

FAIR Multimedia
Publishes a range of health leaflets, audio discs and CDs for people with learning disabilities. This includes a series on cancer.
Email: fair@fairadvice.org.uk
Phone: 0131 662 1962
Web: www.fairadvice.org.uk/health-publications.php
Useful contacts

Online help

www.easyhealth.org.uk
Has lots of online health information that is easy to understand.

www.macmillan.org.uk
Has lots of information about cancer and where to get help. You can also talk to other people with cancer in the online community.

Videos and DVDs

Leeds Animation Workshop
Has animated films on social issues for people with learning disabilities. There is one called ‘Getting Better’ about going to the doctor and the health clinic.
Phone: 0113 248 4997
Web: www.leedsanimation.org.uk/index.html

Speak Up Self Advocacy
Has DVDs and booklets for people with learning disabilities about health and illness.
Web: www.speakup.org.uk
CHANGE is a leading national Human Rights organisation led by disabled people. We work for equal rights for all people with learning disabilities. The cancer books and booklets that CHANGE have produced are part of an ongoing campaign to raise awareness about the issues of cancer for people with learning disabilities. You can call CHANGE on 0113 242 6619, email info@changepeople.org or find us at www.changepeople.org

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

Macmillan Cancer Support has reviewed the information in this booklet and paid for it to be produced. They are a charity who help people with cancer. They have nurses and other health workers. They try to make cancer care in the UK better. They have experts who can answer your questions about cancer and how it affects your life. You can call Macmillan on 0808 808 00 00 or textphone 0808 808 0121 (Mon–Fri, 9am–8pm). Or go to macmillan.org.uk

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