

# HOW IS PRIMARY BREAST CANCER TREATED?

## Radiotherapy

**BREAST  
CANCER  
NOW** The research  
& care charity

This information is for anyone who has primary breast cancer and wants to know more about how it is treated.

It is written by Breast Cancer Now, a charity that helps people who have breast cancer and other breast conditions.

You can also get Breast Cancer Now's longer free booklet **Treating primary breast cancer.**

# WHAT IS IN THIS INFORMATION?

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In this information is a simple summary of radiotherapy to treat primary breast cancer. Click on a question below to go straight to that section.

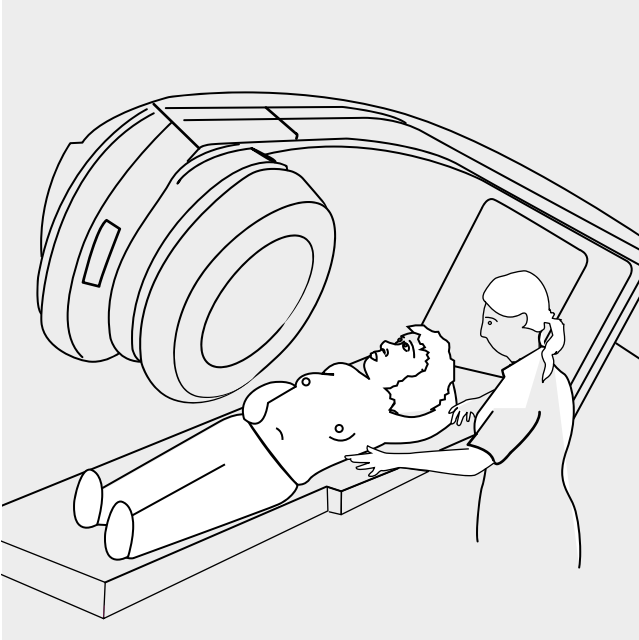
## Radiotherapy

What is radiotherapy?

What are the side effects of radiotherapy?

# RADIOTHERAPY

## What is radiotherapy?



Radiotherapy uses x-rays to kill cancer cells.

The x-rays are carefully measured and targeted. This is so that they kill cancer cells but cause as little harm as possible to other parts of the body.

If you are having surgery then chemotherapy, you usually have radiotherapy after your chemotherapy has finished.

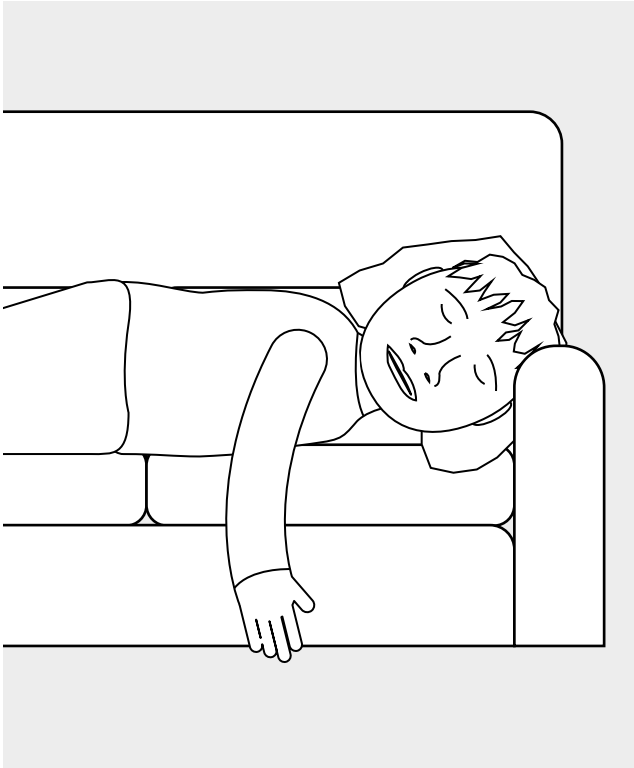
Radiotherapy is given to the breast to kill any cancer cells that might be left behind after surgery.

Some other places where radiotherapy can be used to treat breast cancer are:

- Under the arm to kill any cancer cells in the lymph nodes
- The chest after a mastectomy
- The side of your neck and around your collarbone on the side where you had surgery

# SIDE EFFECTS

## What are the side effects of radiotherapy?



The x-rays used in radiotherapy can sometimes cause side effects. Some of the most common side effects are listed here.

- Being tired
- Redness in the part of your body being treated
- Soreness and aching

Always tell your breast care nurse or treatment team how your treatment is affecting you. They can often suggest things to help.

Radiotherapy can sometimes cause swelling in your arm, hand or breast area. This can happen weeks, months or even years after your treatment. This swelling is called lymphoedema.

# INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

## Where can I find out more about my treatments?

There are more simple summary slides about treating primary breast cancer. Find them by clicking on subject areas at this website page

[breastcancernow.org/primarytreatment](https://breastcancernow.org/primarytreatment)

You can get Breast Cancer Now's longer free booklet  
**Treating primary breast cancer**

Call our Helpline on **0808 800 6000**