

Brain metastases

What happens now?



Information for patients

Stereotactic Radiosurgery



You have now completed your radiosurgery treatment and we will be discharging you from hospital.

You are probably feeling very relieved that it is all over but worried about your aftercare and possible side effects from the treatment.

The aim of this booklet is to give you information on how you will feel and what to expect. It also contains contact numbers should you feel anxious about your condition after treatment so please keep it for a while.

Immediate side effects

The pin sites in your scalp are going to feel sore as the effect of the anaesthetic wears off this evening. Nursing staff will be able to give you some pain relief for this, or if you are leaving hospital on the day of treatment you can take whatever you normally take for pain eg Paracetamol.

The tiny holes may ooze a little over night but should have scabbed over by the morning.

You may experience a mild headache on the night after treatment, yet your scalp will probably feel numb and tingly.

It will have been a long day so you may well feel tired and perhaps emotional.

The day after treatment

If you have stayed overnight on the ward, one of the therapy radiographers will come to discharge you from the hospital at about 8.00am. This is an opportunity for you to discuss any worries you may have. If necessary we will ask one of our doctors to see you. **Most people feel fine and do not have problems.**

Your pin sites will still be a little tender but the scabs should now have dried.

We would like them to stay dry and in place as these scabs prevent infection and are the best protection for the holes, so please:

- **Don't** wash your hair for three days
- **Don't** cover the holes with elastoplast or any creams or lotions
- **Don't** pick the scabs
- **Do** be careful combing your hair
- **Do** take mild painkillers if they still feel sore.

Is there anything I should look out for at home?

If you notice swelling, redness and increasing pain from your pin sites, please go to your GP as you may require antibiotics for an infection.

You will probably still have a numb scalp and this can last quite a while (some people say weeks).

The feeling of tiredness can also last some time. This will vary for each person depending on what you had treated and how well you were beforehand.

We would advise you to take it easy for a couple of days and then assess whether you feel fit to resume your normal pace of life. For most of you that should be very soon.

Later effects that will only be experienced by a few people

If you have had seizures or epilepsy in the past you may experience a further seizure within 48 hours after treatment. This is caused by the local effects of the treatment on the brain and is not a cause for concern. Only a few people will experience this.

Radiosurgery treatment can cause a small patch of hair loss if the area treated is near the surface of the brain. The team will advise you of the location and estimate the size of the area if this is applicable to you.

Three to four weeks after treatment all the hair in this small area will fall out. Your skin may be slightly sore and pink at first and the hair will start to re-grow in about three months' time. One of the radiographers will discuss this, in detail, if this applies to you after your treatment.

You lose hair.

Late side effects

The medical staff who saw you before your treatment and obtained your informed consent will have explained to you the possible, fortunately rare, side effects that may occur after treatment. As these are very much dependent on the nature of your condition, they will not be listed in this general leaflet.

If you have any particular questions regarding this, please do not hesitate to ask.

Follow-up care

On completion of your radiosurgery treatment a discharge letter is automatically sent to your referring consultant (usually this is your Oncologist) and GP outlining the details of your treatment plan. The responsibility for your care passes back to your referring consultant at this point. Any follow up appointments, including scans, will be arranged locally by your Oncology team.

When is your next appointment with the Oncology team?
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Although your care has been passed back to your Oncology team you can contact us at any time if you have any concerns or questions regarding your treatment.

The radiographers treating today are:

If you were taking **Dexamethasone** prior to your admission, your dose may have been changed during the period of your treatment. When your treatment is completed and you are discharged from the hospital your Dexamethasone dose will be
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It is very important that your Dexamethasone dose is reviewed after your radiosurgery treatment is completed and this should be discussed with your referring consultant or GP. Again, this only applies if you were taking Dexamethasone prior to your admission for radiosurgery.

The **DVLA** restrictions are unaffected by your radiosurgery treatment so the no driving guidance remains in place. Please refer to the DVLA website for further information.

You will have a **CT or MRI scan** at regular intervals organised by your local consultant in consultation with our doctors in Sheffield. This will enable us to assess your response to treatment which does not happen immediately.

NHS England Requirements

In partnership with NHS England we will be sending you a Health Questionnaire in 9 months, identical to the one you completed in clinic, to fill in and return to us.

We would be grateful if you could let us know if you develop any new or worsening physical weakness or visual problems within the next 6 months which does not resolve spontaneously.

In addition, should you require any further surgery or radiotherapy to your head in the next 12 months please let us know so that we may update your records.

Your response will help NHS England to improve the quality of care provided to you and other patients.

Letters will be sent automatically as a reminder of these NHS England requirements.

Contacts

Hopefully, you will find this booklet of help during the time immediately after your discharge and before your first appointment with your referring consultant. If, however, you need to discuss anything further or seek more advice you can contact us on the following numbers.

For those of you who have returned home straight after treatment you may seek advice for that night only from Ward N2 at the Royal Hallamshire hospital on:

- **0114 271 2891**

For advice on possible side effects or follow up problems after treatment you can contact the radiographers on:

- **0114 226 8952**

or link to our centre on email to **Gamma.Knife@nhs.net**

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Clinical enquiries:

- Radiographers **+44 (0) 114 226 8952**
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- Website: **www.gammaknife.org.uk**

The department is open routinely Monday to Friday, 8.00am - 5.30pm



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