

# NCCP patient pathway for attendance for radiation oncology during the COVID-19 pandemic

## 2 weeks prior to attendance for radiation oncology

- All patients attending for radiotherapy should be advised to minimise their risk of COVID-19 exposure for two weeks prior to treatment in line with public health advice. The following patients are at high risk:
  - patients with lung, oesophageal or head and neck cancers,
  - patients having concomitant chemoradiotherapy,
  - patients whose treatment requires any theatre access (e.g. brachytherapy),
  - patients receiving thyroid cancer treatment with high dose radioactive iodine,
  - patients with significant comorbidities.
- All patients receiving radiotherapy should be informed of the benefit of vaccination and to pay special attention to hand hygiene, social distancing, respiratory etiquette and mask wearing advice.
- Patients should be asked to note any COVID-19 signs or symptoms in a diary.

The hospital should contact the patient 24-48 hours prior to date of planned admission to perform a COVID-19 Patient Triage. If the patient has been diagnosed with COVID-19, please follow NCCP guidance<sup>1</sup>

## Up to 72 hours prior to first attendance for radiation oncology

The following patients **should** have an RT-PCR COVID-19 test up to 72 hours prior to starting treatment:

- Patients who have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19
- Patients due to undergo a theatre procedure, such as brachytherapy
- Patients due to undergo thyroid cancer treatment with high dose radioactive iodine

Any patient who has had an RT-PCR COVID-19 test should not attend for radiotherapy until they have received their results and the team have made a decision regarding commencing their treatment.

The hospital should perform a COVID-19 Patient Triage.

## Day of attendance for radiation oncology

- Patients who have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 should have an RT-PCR COVID-19 and their treatment should be deferred. If treatment must commence or continue due to urgency follow the COVID-19 pathway.
- Other patients requiring testing will be based on clinical judgement.

Any patient who has had a RT-PCR COVID-19 test should not attend for radiotherapy until they have received their results and the team have made a decision regarding commencing or continuing their treatment.

If the patient has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they should follow the COVID-19 pathway.

## During treatment

- All patients should be asked to minimise their risk of exposure to COVID-19 during treatment. The following patients are at high risk:
  - patients with lung, oesophageal or head and neck cancers being treated with radiotherapy,
  - patients having concomitant chemoradiotherapy,
  - patients with significant comorbidities.
- All patients receiving radiotherapy should be informed of the benefit of vaccination and to pay special attention to hand hygiene, social distancing, respiratory etiquette and mask wearing advice.
- Patients should be asked to note any COVID-19 signs or symptoms in a diary.

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to 'NCCP advice on the management of patients undergoing radiation oncology treatment, in response to the current novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic' for more information