

Preparing your bladder before radiotherapy to your pelvis (anus/rectum)

You have been referred to have radiotherapy treatment to your pelvis (anus or rectum). We may ask you to drink some water before your radiotherapy appointments (including pre-treatment/planning appointments and treatment appointments). We may also ask you to change the amount of water you drink or advise you not to drink any water before some of your appointments, so it is important to follow our instructions carefully.

Why might I need to drink water before my appointments?

If we ask you to drink water before your appointments, it is because we want your bladder to be reasonably full - but not so full that it is uncomfortable to hold for some time. When your bladder is reasonably full, it can push part of your small bowel out of the treatment area. This may help to reduce some of the side effects from the radiotherapy and ensures that the treatments are accurate each time.

Why might I be asked not to drink water before some of my appointments?

Some of our treatment techniques take considerably longer, for example radiotherapy treatment on the MR Linac. Your bladder will fill too much during this time. This can be uncomfortable and push the area we want to treat to another position inside your body, making it difficult to deliver treatment accurately.

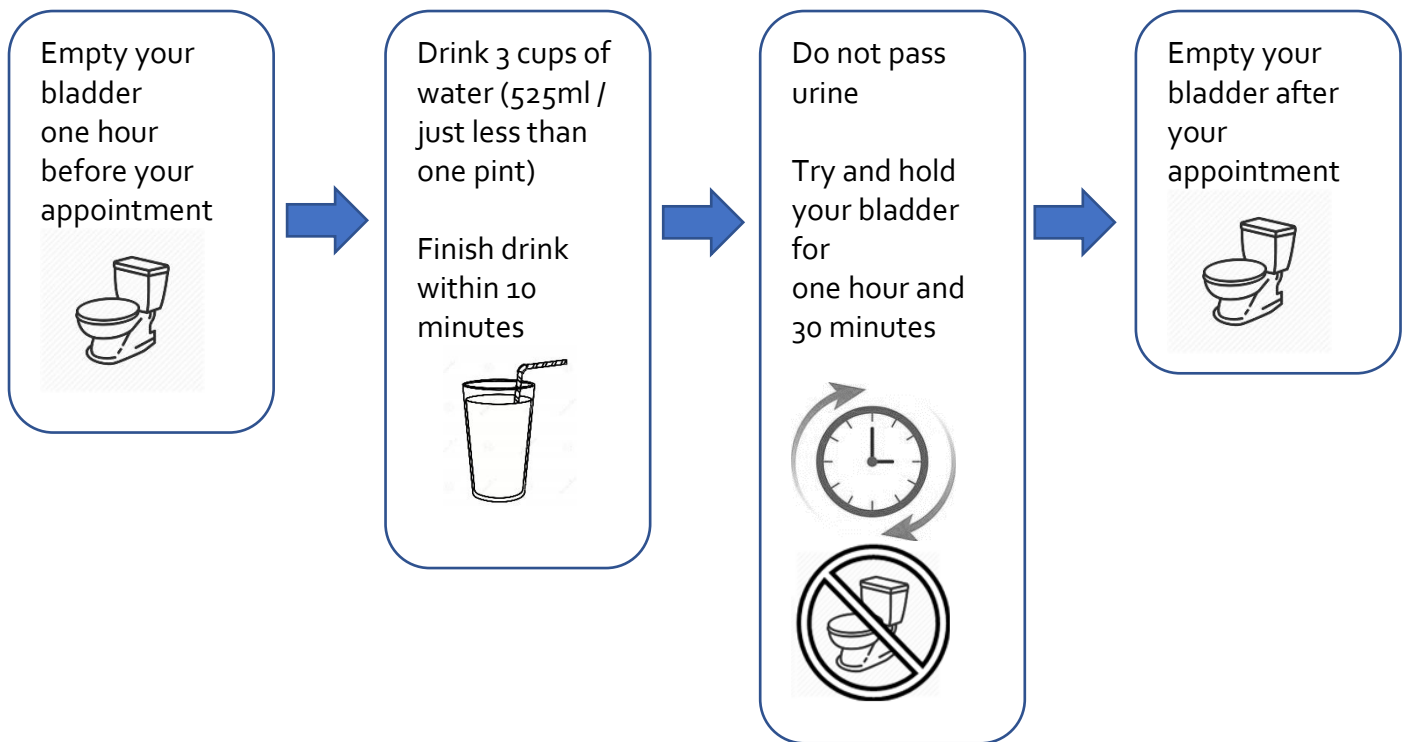
How do I make my bladder comfortably full?

If we have asked you to fill your bladder, please follow the instructions below. You may like to try it at home first, a couple of days before your first appointment.

Instructions

- First empty your bladder one hour before your appointment
- Then drink 3 cups (525ml / just less than one pint) of water within 10 minutes. You will be given a water bottle at your pre-treatment radiotherapy planning appointment to help you measure this
- Do not pass urine for one hour, and see if you feel comfortable
- Ideally, you should still be reasonably comfortable for slightly longer - approximately one hour and 30 minutes. This will allow extra time in case there is a delay to your treatment
- You can empty your bladder after your appointment.





What happens if I cannot hold on?

If you have difficulty managing to hold a full bladder, then please tell the radiographers at your first visit or phone them (see contact details below).

What happens if there are delays and I need to empty my bladder?

If you cannot hold a full bladder, then please inform one of the radiographers on your treatment machine.

Should I change how much I drink during the day?

We suggest you drink a total of two litres of fluid a day (such as water, tea, coffee, soft drinks). This should keep you well hydrated.

Contact details

Please contact us if you have any concerns or queries.

Sutton	Pre-treatment radiographers:	020 8661 3262
	Radiotherapy department:	020 8905 6020
Chelsea	Pre-treatment radiographers:	020 7808 2552
	Radiotherapy department:	020 7808 2540

Alternatively, please call:

The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline: 020 8915 6899
(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

