

Preparing your bladder before radiotherapy to your pelvis (gynaecological)

You have been referred to have radiotherapy treatment to your pelvis for a gynaecological cancer. You will need to have a comfortably full bladder for your Pre-Treatment Radiotherapy planning scan and every treatment appointment.

Why do I need a full bladder?

When your bladder is comfortably full it will push your bowel and part of the bladder out of the treatment area. This may help to reduce some side effects from the radiotherapy; therefore, it is important to correctly fill your bladder before each appointment. Your ability to keep a comfortably full bladder will depend on how often you usually pass urine. If you need to pass urine more often than every two hours, please tell the doctor.

We suggest you drink a total of two litres of fluid each day (such as water, squash and soft non-fizzy drinks). This should keep you adequately hydrated and ensure the water you drink before your treatment fills your bladder. We recommend you limit your intake of tea, coffee, alcohol and caffeinated soft drinks as they can cause bladder irritation.

How do I make my bladder comfortably full?

You will be instructed by staff at your Pre-Treatment Radiotherapy planning appointment and prior to your first Radiotherapy treatment on how to appropriately achieve the desired bladder size.

Instructions for radiotherapy treatment:

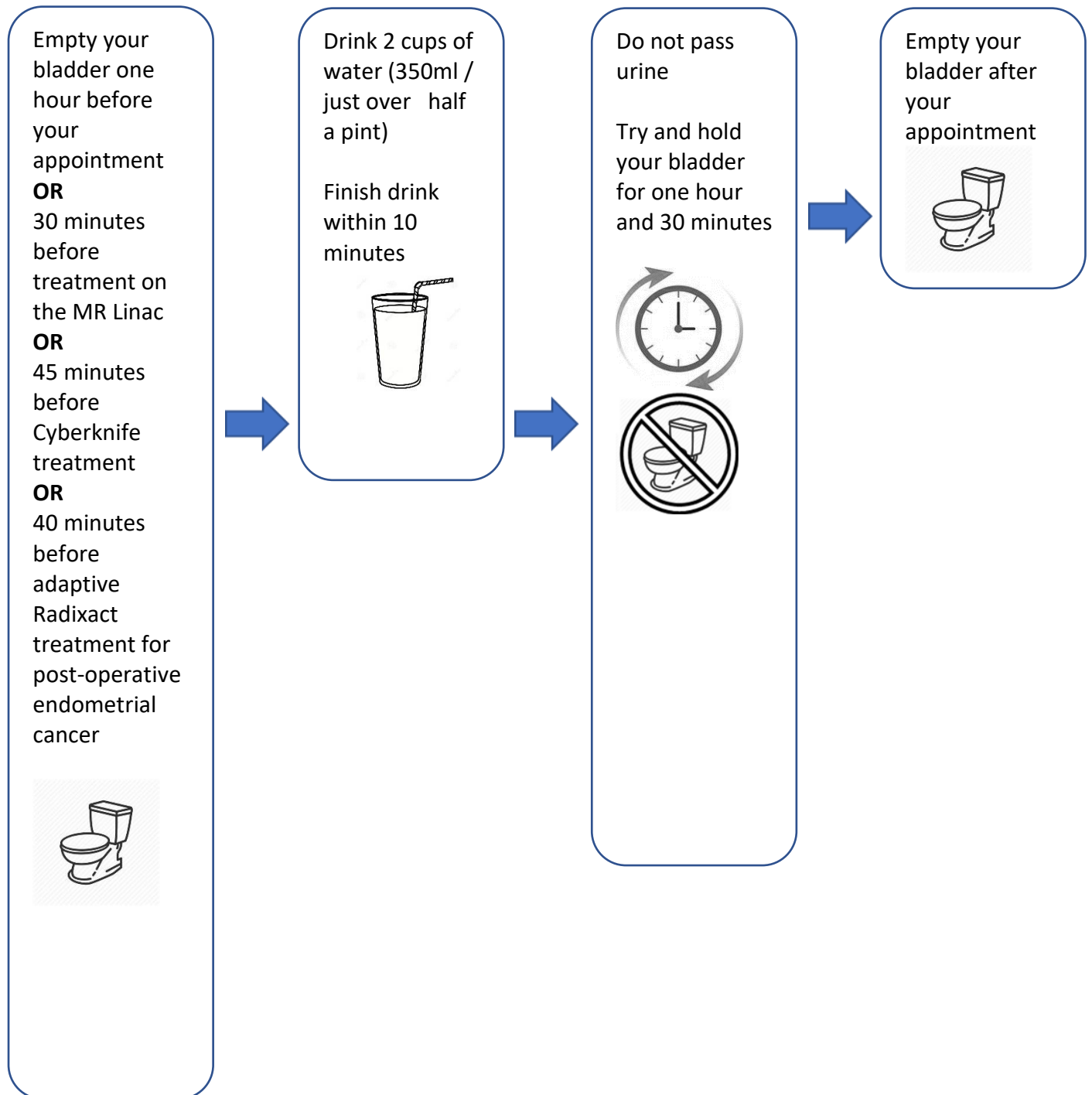
- First empty your bladder. The timing of this will depend on the type of treatment you are to receive:
 - **60 minutes** before your appointment for conventional radiotherapy
 - **45 minutes** before your appointment if you are having Cyberknife treatment
 - **40 minutes** before your appointment if you are having Adaptive Radiotherapy treatment using Radixact, after surgery for an endometrial cancer
 - **30 minutes** before your appointment if you are having treatment on the MR Linac
- Then drink 2 cups (350ml / just over half a pint) of water within 10 minutes. We will give you a water bottle at your Pre-Treatment Radiotherapy planning appointment to help you measure this.
- Do not pass urine until your treatment has finished



You may like to try this at home first, a couple of days before your first appointment.

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 may find it helpful to set a reminder or alarm each day to prompt you to empty your bladder and drink water.



What happens if I cannot hold a full bladder?

If you have difficulty managing to hold a full bladder, then please tell the radiographers at your first visit. To help you, we may ask you to hold your bladder for a reduced time.

If, on any day before treatment, you feel like you will not be able to hold your bladder for another 10–15 minutes, please let a member of staff know.

Before treatment, the radiographers will usually ask if you are 'ready'. If you do not feel you have achieved your ideal bladder-filling, then please let them know. Your appointment time can then be amended accordingly.

Contact details

Please call the numbers below if you have any concerns or queries.

Sutton

Pre-treatment radiographers 020 8661 3262

Radiotherapy department 020 8915 6020

Chelsea

Pre-treatment radiographers 020 7808 2552

Radiotherapy department 020 7808 2540

