Radiotherapy for ovarian cancer

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Radiotherapy uses x-rays to kill cancer cells or damage them and reduce their activity. It is used less often than chemotherapy, and it may be used to shrink the cancer or to ease your symptoms.

You will usually receive radiotherapy to the pelvis, or other parts of your body if the cancer has spread.

You will be in a room and lie on an examination couch or table. A radiotherapy machine will be located above you. The radiation therapist will position you and the machine then leave the room during treatment.

You will not feel anything during treatment which will only take a few minutes each time. You may be in the room for a total of about 15 to 20 minutes for each appointment.

The number of radiotherapy treatments the doctor recommends will depend on your situation. You may have treatment for a week or daily outpatient treatment for several weeks. Your doctor will explain how often you need to have treatment and the possible side effects.

Side effects of radiotherapy

The side effects of radiotherapy depend on the strength of the dose and the part of your body that is treated. You may have:

- fatigue and tiredness
- loose bowels (diarrhoea)
- frequency and stinging when emptying your bladder
- nausea
- vomiting.

Some women who have a higher dose of radiotherapy have long-term side effects, such as changes in their bowel habits.

For more information on radiotherapy and side effects, talk to your medical team.

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