

radiation therapy for prostate cancer and physiotherapy

Physiotherapy has a role to play in supporting blokes that are undergoing, or have previously undergone, radiation treatment for Prostate Cancer. The information below is designed to help you understand the role that Physiotherapy can play in counteracting potential treatment side effects.

radiation therapy basics

Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays to target cancer cells. Depending on the situation, it might be used as an isolated treatment strategy, or in combination with other modalities (e.g. alongside hormone therapy or after surgery). Different types of radiation treatment are available, with two of the most common being external beam radiation therapy (EBRT) and brachytherapy (internal radiation).

For more information regarding radiation therapy and Prostate Cancer, you can visit the [Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia \(PCFA\) publications website](#).

possible side effects

As with many things in medicine (and life!), radiation treatment carries some potential risks and side effects. Some of these side effects might occur during or soon after treatment, others can sometimes present years down the track. If you're still in the treatment decision making stage, you should discuss these in detail with an expert (e.g. a Radiation Oncologist). Some potential side effects that are relevant to Physiotherapy include:

- Urinary problems e.g. urgency, frequency and leakage (incontinence)
- Bowel problems e.g. faecal urgency and difficulty controlling your wind or bowels
- Pelvic pain
- Erectile dysfunction
- General fatigue

how can physio help?

Although there isn't as much research on the role of Physiotherapy in radiation as there is with surgery, it is suggested that Physiotherapy can be useful. An appropriately trained Physiotherapist can complete a comprehensive pelvic health assessment to determine if Physiotherapy may be

beneficial for you. If relevant, this may include a transperineal ultrasound assessment of your pelvic floor function, which is important for bladder and bowel function. Research confirms that a well-directed pelvic floor exercise program can be useful in improving irritative symptoms (e.g. urinary urgency and frequency) caused by radiation. Likewise, bladder training is often regarded as an effective technique for similar symptoms. A Physiotherapist can provide you with advice regarding healthy bowel habits and an anorectal pelvic floor exercise program to help address bowel dysfunction. In conjunction with medical Doctors, a relevantly trained Physiotherapist is also well placed to offer you an opinion on whether their input is likely to be useful for pelvic pain issues.

what do i do if i have more questions?

If you have more questions regarding the role of Physiotherapy and radiation therapy for Prostate Cancer, you can talk to your treating Doctor or contact a Men's Health Physiotherapist. On the Darling Downs and in Toowoomba, Men's Health Physiotherapy Toowoomba (mhPT) provides expert and dedicated services to this patient group. Please feel free to contact our clinic on the details above if you have any questions, or if you'd like to book an appointment.