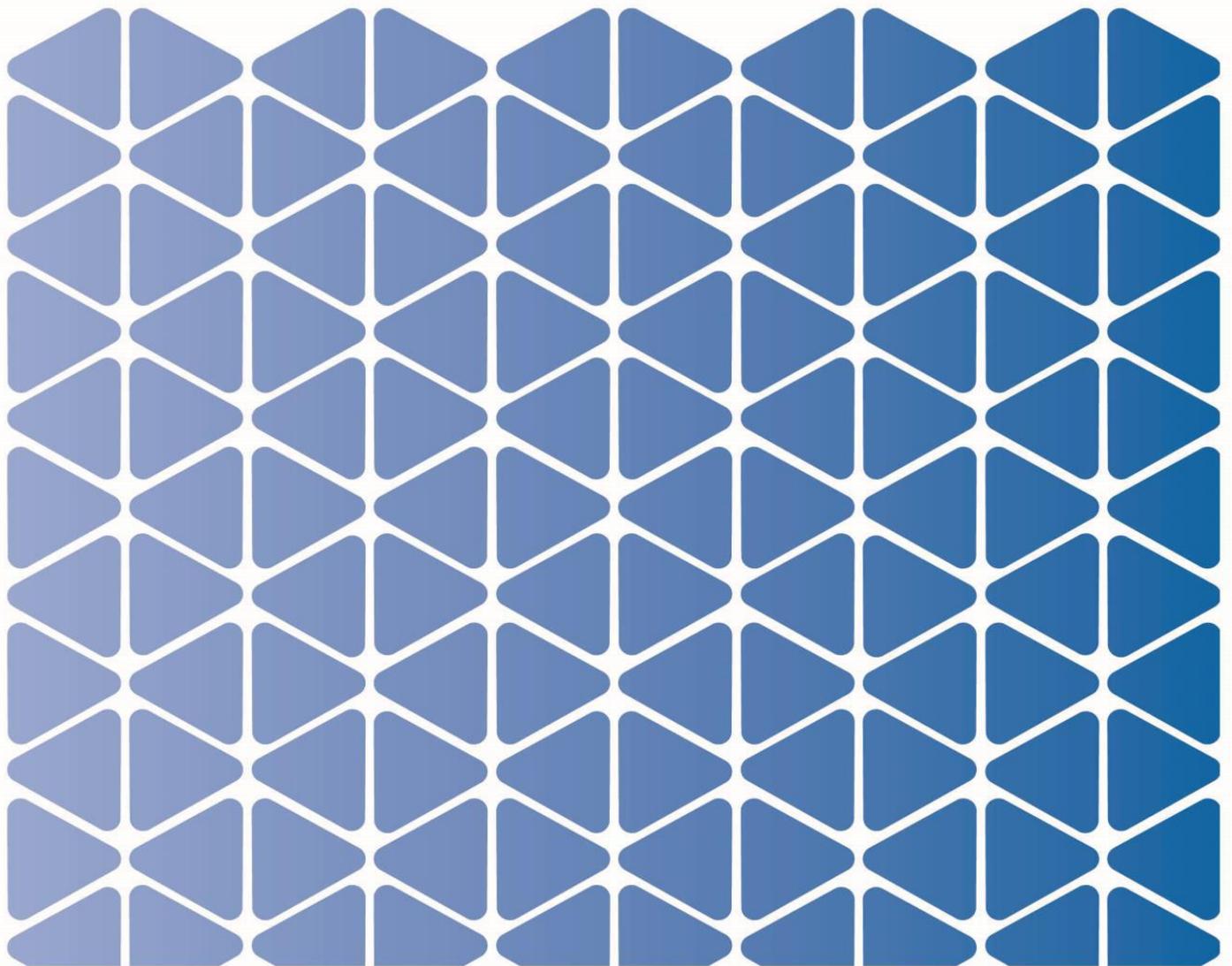




PATIENT INFORMATION

RADIOTHERAPY: SWALLOW AND LYMPHOEDEMA EXERCISES



Radiotherapy Swallow Exercises (adapted from The Leeds Cancer Centre and The Worcester Lymphoedema Service)

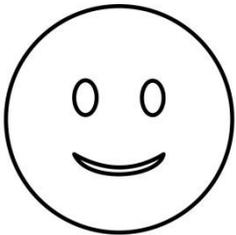
These exercises are designed to prevent long-term swallowing difficulties after radiotherapy.

Exercising the facial, neck and shoulder muscles is important as this will help improve the lymphatic drainage.

Allow 10 minutes to complete.

Lymphoedema Exercises

- Ideally done at least twice a day slowly and rhythmically, they should not cause pain or discomfort.
- Try and use all facial muscles as normal avoiding over exertion as this may increase the swelling.
- Exaggerated facial expressions-repeat throughout the day.



Smiling a big wide smile, feel the tension then relax
Repeat 5 times



Frowning Slowly scrunch up your eyes, feel face tighten
Repeat 5 times



Yawning Open mouth wide enough but not painfully
Repeat 5 times

Gentle exercises to the neck will also help shoulder and neck movement, as follows:

- Turning head slowly side to side.
- Moving head slowly up and down.
- Gentle circling of the head.
- Shrugging the shoulders.
- Rotating the shoulders backwards then forwards.

Repeat these 5 times a day if possible.

Aim to complete this set of exercises at least 3 times a day on the days you receive radiotherapy (Monday to Friday)

Exercise 1: Jaw stretch

Open your mouth wide to stretch your jaw.

Hold for 30 seconds.

Rest.

Repeat 3 times.

If you experience any pain with this exercise, please discuss with your Speech and Language Therapist.

Exercise 2: Tongue hold and swallow

Push the tip of your tongue forward between your front teeth (or gums).

Gently hold the tip of your tongue in this position.

Swallow your saliva without releasing the tongue tip.

Repeat 5 times (you may need to moisten your mouth in between repetitions).

Exercise 3: Tongue press

Put the front of your tongue up against the roof of your mouth.

Push the tongue firmly against the roof of your mouth and hold this pressure for 10 seconds.

Repeat 5 times.

Exercise 4: Effortful swallow

Gather some saliva in your mouth and imagine there is a golf ball mixed in with it that you must swallow.

Tuck your chin in tightly.

Swallow hard, using all the muscles in your throat to push the golf ball through.

Repeat 5 times (you may need to moisten your mouth between each repetition).

Exercise 5: Pitch glide

Say “eee” in your highest possible pitch (like a squeaky mouse).

Hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat 3 times

Exercise 6: Shaker exercise - 3 times each day (Monday – Friday) for 6-8 weeks

Please seek advice from your speech therapist, as side effects of radiotherapy may make this challenging to complete.

Part 1:

- Lie down on your back on the bed/floor. Your shoulders need to be flat against the surface
- Keep your shoulders flat against the bed or floor and lift up your head, bringing your chin down to your chest (until you can see your toes)
- Keep your head lifted for 60 secs and then lower your head and rest for 60 secs
- Repeat 3 times

Part 2:

- Lie down on your back on the bed/floor. Do not use a pillow because your shoulders must be flat against the surface
- Keep your shoulders flat against the bed/floor and lift up your head, bringing your chin down to your chest. Then immediately lower your head
- Repeat these steps 30 times

Tips for exercises

Build them into your routine by attaching them to mealtimes or something else you do regularly (e.g. mouthcare).

If you have pain, time your exercises with when your pain is best controlled.

Talk to your Speech and Language Therapist if you have any difficulties completing these exercises – we may need to adjust them.

Things to look out for:

- *Coughing or choking/shortness of breath/wet voice when eating or drinking.*
- *Food or drink sticking in your throat.*
- *Recent chest infection.*

If you have any concerns about your swallowing, we are here to help.

WRH SLT
Telephone: 01905 760475



If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PET@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.