

# Epidermal radiotherapy using rhenium-188 paste for non-melanoma skin cancer

Information for the public

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[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

This procedure can only be done as part of a research study. This is because there is not enough evidence to be sure how well it works or how safe it is.

Your healthcare professional should talk to you about the research.

Non-melanoma skin cancer develops slowly over months or years in the top (epidermal) layers of the skin. In this procedure, a protective foil is placed on the cancer. Then, radioactive paste (rhenium-188 paste) is spread on top of the foil to deliver radiation to the cancer (radiotherapy). The foil and paste are usually left in place for about 30 to 180 minutes. The aim is to destroy the cancer cells, which are slowly replaced with new healthy cells.

## Is this procedure right for me?

You should be included in [making decisions about your care](#).

Your healthcare professionals should explain the risks and benefits of this procedure and how it is done. They should discuss your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should offer you more information about the procedure. Your family or carers can be involved if you want or need them to be.

You will be asked to decide whether you agree (consent) to have the procedure. Find out more about [giving consent to treatment on the NHS website](#).

## Some questions to think about

- How many appointments will I need?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- Will I have to stay in hospital?
- What happens if it does not work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I do not want the procedure?
- Are other treatments available?

## Information and support

The [NHS webpage on non-melanoma skin cancer](#) may be a good place to find out more.

- [NICE's information on HealthTech guidance](#) explains what HealthTech is and how we assess it.
- [NICE's information on HealthTech recommendations](#) explains what 'only in research' means.

[Skcin](#) (0115 9819116) can give you advice and support.

You can also get support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

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