

Will and Sophie have radiotherapy

A children's guide to radiotherapy





**If you need to have
radiotherapy treatment,
this booklet is for you.**

It tells the story of a boy and
girl having radiotherapy treatment.

If there is anything you are not
sure about, ask a grown
up to help you.



Meet Will

Today Will is going to visit the radiotherapy department. He is going to hear all about his treatment and meet some new people. He already knows a few nurses and doctors and is not sure he wants to meet anyone new.

Will visits the radiotherapy department

Sitting next to Will is a little girl; Will asks her name and why she is there. She tells Will her name is Sophie and that she is going to have some radiotherapy treatment to her tummy. She says she has just met some radiographers, who know all about radiotherapy treatment and they are very nice.



Sophie was worried it might hurt, but the radiographers have told her it doesn't.

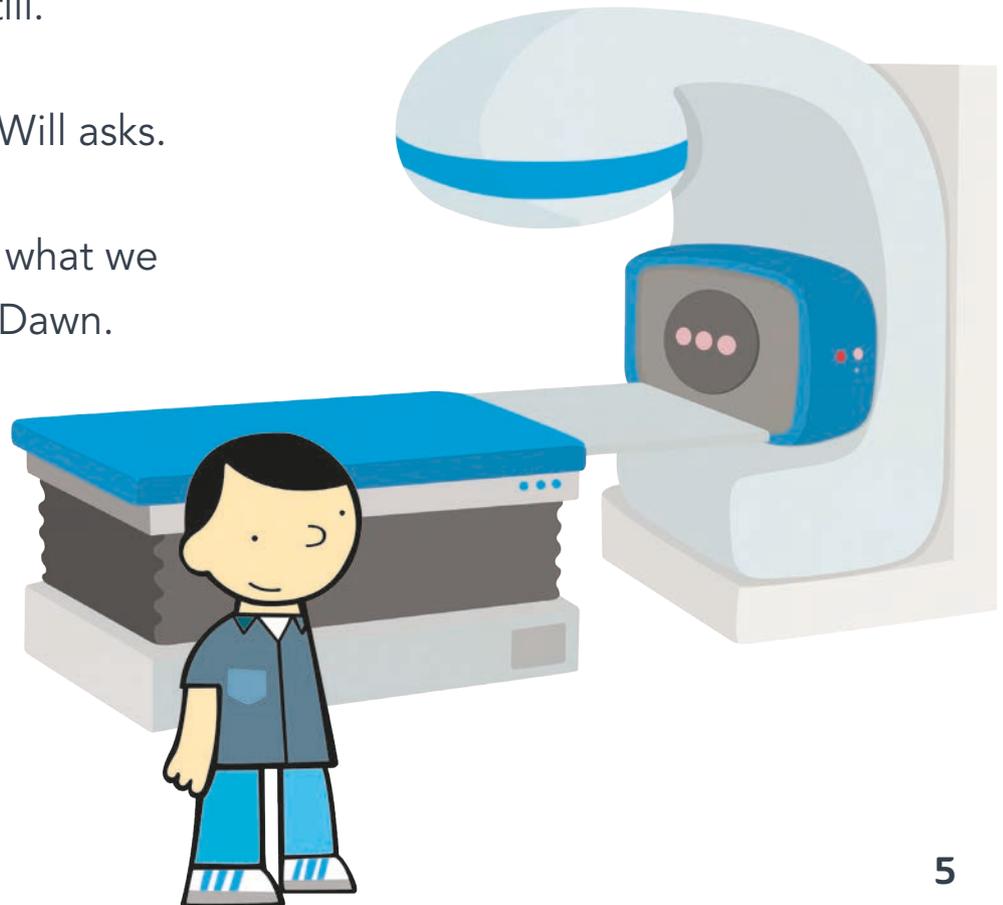
Will tells Sophie he is also going to have radiotherapy and his treatment is going to be to his head.

One of the radiographers called Dawn comes to speak to Will.
“Would you like to come with me and see what is going to happen?” she asks.

Will follows Dawn and she takes him into a big room with a machine in it. “This is where you will have your treatment but before we can start the treatment we need to make a special mask to help you lie still.”

“Will the mask hurt?” Will asks.

“No, let me show you what we are going to do” said Dawn.



Will has a mask made

Dawn takes Will to the mask-making room, and he plays with a piece of special plastic that has lots of holes in it. At Will's next visit, he will have his mask made.

Will knows he will have to lie very still to have this treatment as his mummy had talked about it. He also knows that if he was a little bit younger and couldn't lie very still he might have had to have a medicine, called an anaesthetic, to make him go to sleep every time he had some treatment.

At the next visit, Dawn reminds Will what is going to happen.

"First we need to warm the plastic and then lie it over your face. Some people say this feels like a warm wet flannel. The plastic keeps the shape of your head so that when it cools down it will only fit **your** head. To help you lie in exactly the same place, we will use the mask every time you come."

Dawn explains that Will has to lie on his back for his treatment. Sometimes other children might need to be on their tummies.

The radiographers make the mask. Will says it does feel like a warm flannel. They talk to him all the time they are making it, telling him what is happening so he isn't worried.

When this is finished Dawn tells Will he will have a CT scan. Will has had lots of scans before so he knows what to expect.



Will waits for his scan

Will goes back to sit in the children's waiting room and meets Sophie again. She is playing with some toys and the TV is on. He tells her about the mask he is having.

"I'm not having a mask" says Sophie "but I am having some special felt tip marks put on my tummy and I am going to lie on a bean bag each time to keep me in the same position."

Will and Sophie both go off to have their scans, with Will wearing his mask and Sophie lying on her bean bag. After the scans they go home.







What happens next?

The doctor called a clinical oncologist (radiotherapist) looks at the scans and starts to plan the treatment. He does this by drawing on the scan where the treatment is needed.

The scans are given to the technicians and physicists, who look at the area marked and make special treatment plans for Will and Sophie.

The radiographers will use these plans every time Will and Sophie have their treatment. Making these plans can take a week or two.

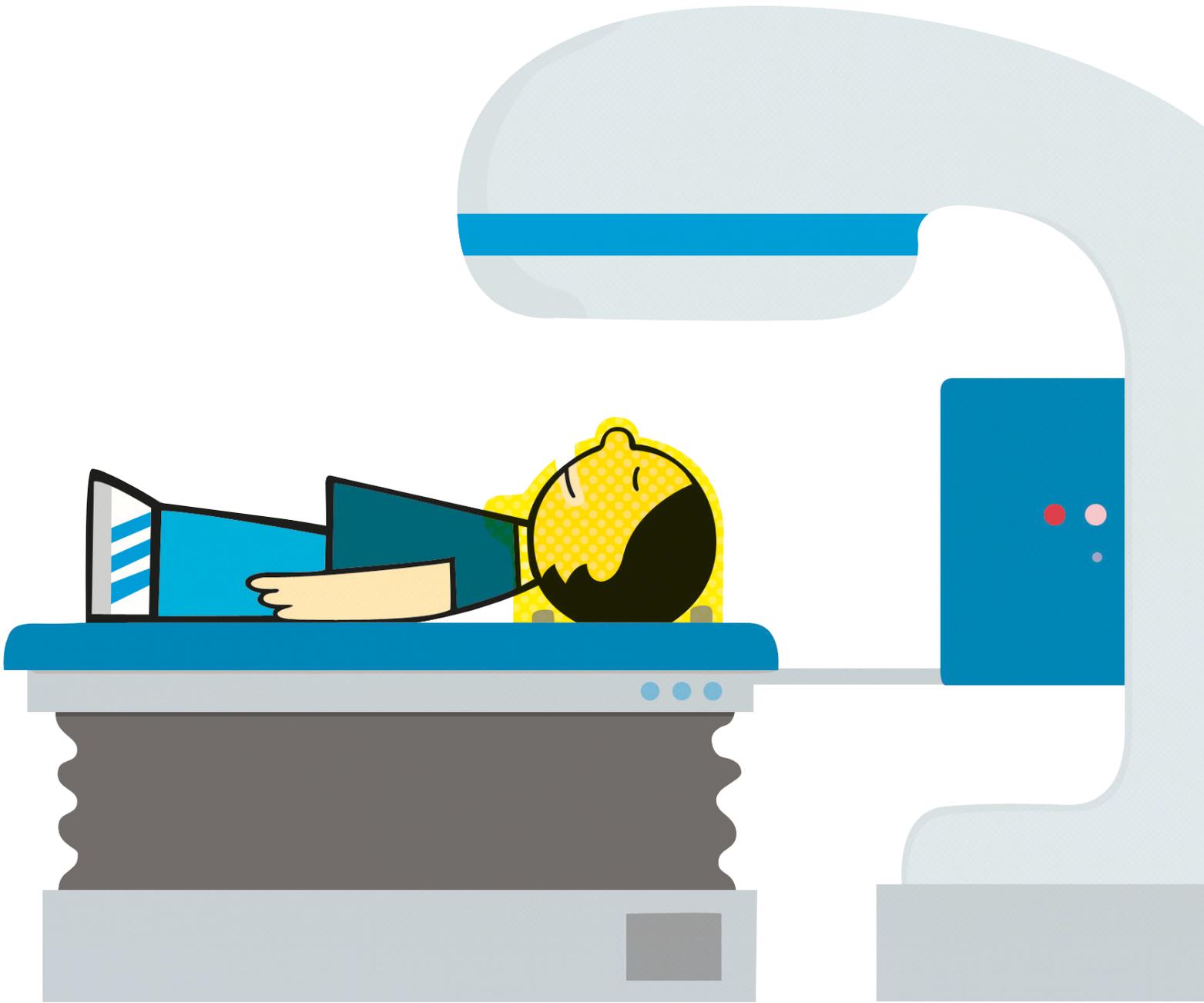
Will and Sophie are told that when the plans are ready, they may need to come back to the radiotherapy department again, for a practice session.

The practice session

When Will comes back for his practice session, he lies on the bed, wearing his mask, which is just like lying down on the CT scanner.

The bed is moved to the right position. This feels a bit strange, a little like being on a slow fairground ride. Will is asked to lie very still for a few minutes whilst the radiographers go into the next room to take an x-ray picture, which looks inside the body.

It is all very quick and doesn't hurt, and the radiographers watch all the time from outside the room. The radiographers tell Will that he has done very well and that he can start his treatment very soon.





What happens next?

By the time Will and Sophie come to have their first treatment they are very good at lying still. They meet some new radiographers who know all about them and their treatment. They lie down on the treatment bed just as they did on the CT scanner and in the practice session.

They get used to being on their own in the room when the treatment is given. They know the radiographers can see them all the time on a screen and can talk to them even when they aren't in the room.

Each treatment is very quick, and there is nothing to see or feel, in fact it can be a bit boring, so both Will and Sophie bring in their favourite music or stories to listen to.

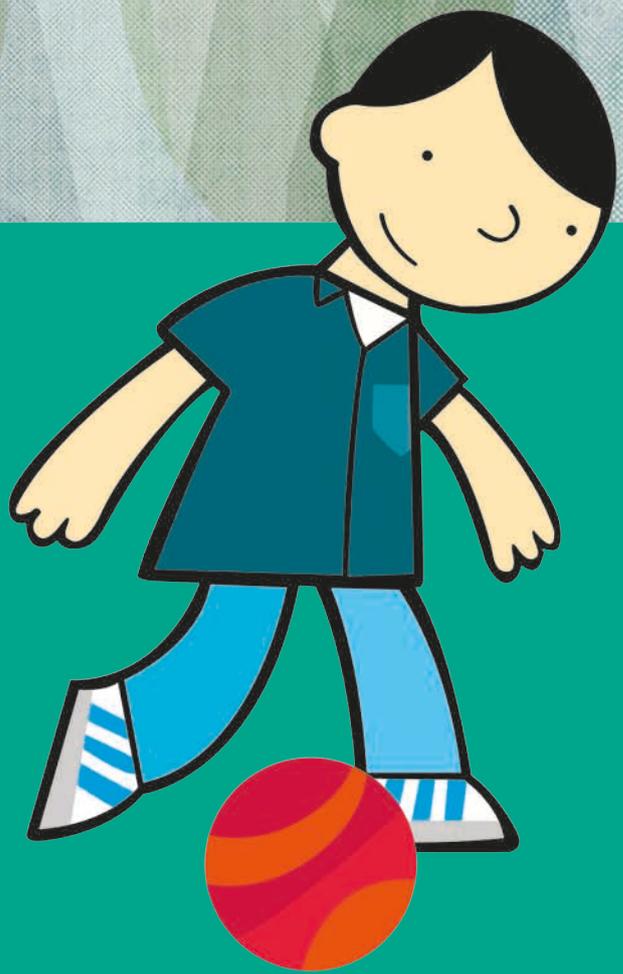
There is one treatment every day for several weeks. They usually get to have a break at weekends though.

More time for play!

Will and Sophie meet up nearly every day. Sometimes they have to see the doctor to check how they are getting on with the treatment. This takes a little longer.

If there is time Will and Sophie both go to school after their treatments. If Will can't get to school his friends come to play with him. Sometimes they play football but if Will is tired they play inside. Will looks forward to seeing his friends very much.

Will gets used to telling friends that it is fine for him to play as his radiotherapy does not make him radioactive!

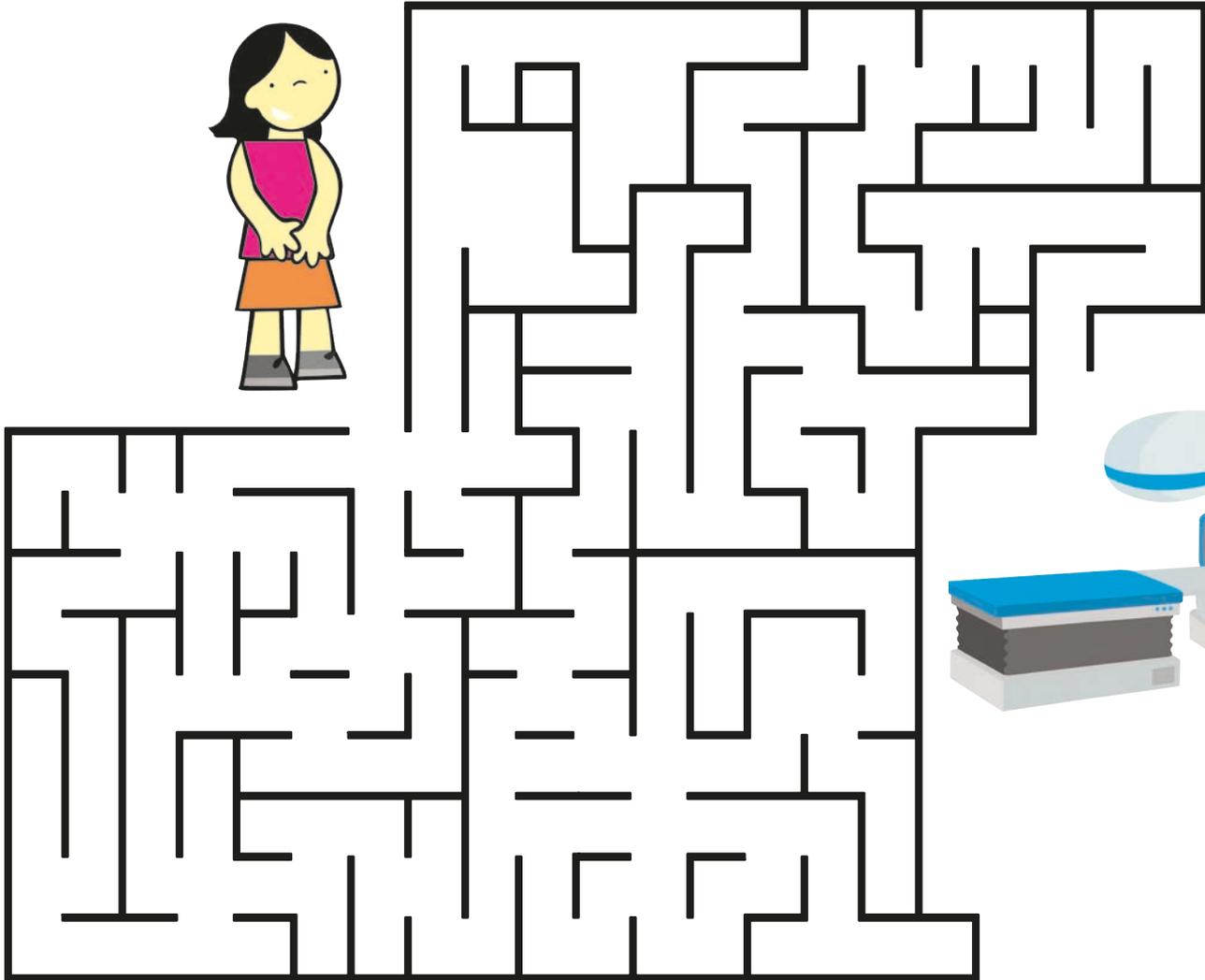
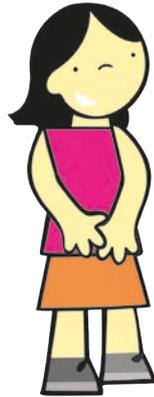




Will and Sophie say goodbye

When all the treatment is finished, Will and Sophie are pleased it's over but sorry to say goodbye to all the new people they have met. Will has completely forgotten that at the beginning he didn't really want the radiotherapy treatment. "I hope I see you again Sophie" says Will. Their mummies promise they will all meet up to play and have tea very soon.

Can you help Sophie find her way to the treatment unit?





Children's
Cancer and
Leukaemia
Group

Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group is a leading children's cancer charity and the UK and Ireland's professional association for those involved in the treatment and care of children with cancer. Each week in the UK and Ireland, more than 30 children are diagnosed. Two out of ten children will not survive their disease.

We bring together childhood cancer professionals to ensure all children receive the best possible treatment and care. We fund and support research into childhood cancers, and we help young patients and their families with our expert, high quality and award-winning information resources.

Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group
Century House
24 De Montfort Street
Leicester LE1 7GB

Registered charity in England and Wales
(1182637) and Scotland (SC049948)

0333 050 7654
info@cclg.org.uk
www.cclg.org.uk

 ChildrensCLG

 CCLG_UK

Original booklet written by Dawn-Marie Davies, Tina Foord and Annie Griffiths for CCLG. This edition produced by the CCLG Publications Committee, comprising multiprofessional experts in the field of children's cancer. Illustrated by Simon Pritchard.

Publication of this booklet was funded by CCLG

© CCLG 2017

Reviewed: March 2021
Next review date: March 2024

If you have any comments on this booklet,
please contact us.

CCLG publications on a variety of
topics related to children's cancer
are available to order or download
free of charge from our website.



Patient Information Forum