



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Radiation Therapy to the Chest

About 2 weeks after your first treatment, you may notice symptoms or side effects caused by radiation therapy. Your doctor will tell you which symptoms you are likely to have, when you will notice them, and how long they will last. The following instructions will help you care for this area and decrease the effects of radiation.

Skin Care

- Do not remove the colored marks from your skin. These outline the area to be treated and must remain in place until treatments are completed.
- Avoid all soaps, lotions, ointments, cosmetics, and perfumed powders on the treatment area. You may dust the area with Johnson's® Baby Powder or cornstarch.
- Wash the area with warm water.
- Do not use heating pads or ice bags on the treatment area.
- Keep the treated area out of the sun.
- Skin changes such as redness, dryness, peeling, and tanning can happen. Itching and dryness may occur. Do not scratch your skin. Please report any break in the skin to the doctor or nurse.
- Your body hair in the treatment area will come out between 2 and 3 weeks after starting treatments.

Diet

- It is important that you eat enough protein and calories during your treatment to maintain your weight. You will be taught about this kind of diet.

Difficulty Swallowing

- Foods that are soft and moist will be easier to swallow.
- Eat small amounts of food often during the day.

- Liquids before meals may be helpful if you notice a burning feeling when you eat.
- If you take medicines in pill form and can not swallow them, try crushing them and taking them with a teaspoon of ice cream or another soft food, such as applesauce.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages, as they will irritate your throat.
- Avoid highly seasoned foods, acidic foods, or foods that are very hot or cold.

Dry or Sore Throat

- Try using a humidifier or vaporizer in your bedroom or main living area.
- Try chewing Aspergum® to decrease soreness in your mouth, unless there is a medical reason that prevents you from taking aspirin.
- Do not smoke cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Do not chew tobacco.
- Drink at least 4 to 6 glasses of fluid a day.
- Try sucking on sugarless mints and candy to add saliva to your mouth.
- Mix 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda in 8 ounces of warm water. Gargle with this solution several times a day. Do not use over-the-counter mouthwashes or lozenges.

Persistent Cough

- For persistent cough, doctors advise the use of Robitussin® cough medicine due to its low alcohol content. If you have a lot of phlegm, make sure you are drinking enough fluids to keep the phlegm thin so you may cough this up more easily.

Fatigue

- You may notice that you feel very tired during the latter weeks of your treatment. This is expected. We suggest you pace your activities and plan for rest periods to avoid becoming overtired.
- You are encouraged to discuss any problems concerning side effects, diet, or any other aspect of your therapy with your doctor or nurse.

Notes: