



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Radiation Therapy to the Mouth and Neck

About 2 weeks after your first treatment, you may notice skin changes around your mouth and throat. These changes are a part of your therapy and are short-term. The following instructions will help you care for these areas 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. Wash with lukewarm water only and pat dry. Do not scrub.
- Avoid all soaps, lotions, ointments, cosmetics, and perfumed powders on the treatment area.
- Use only an electric razor to shave.
- 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.
- Avoid tightfitting clothing around your neck.
- Wear dentures as little as possible.

Mouth Care

- Instructions regarding dental care will be given by the doctor.
- You may be referred to a dentist for preventative care before your therapy begins.
- Use a soft bristle toothbrush after meals and at bedtime.

- Use a mouthwash made of 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda, and 4 cups of water.
- Use this mouthwash every hour.
- Do not use a store bought mouthwash.
- Stay away from alcoholic and carbonated drinks, tobacco, acidic juices (such as orange juice), and highly seasoned foods.
- Stay away from rough, crunchy foods such as potato chips, nuts, and pretzels. You should not eat foods that are very hot or cold.
- The saliva in your mouth may become thick or decrease during your treatment. Foods are easier to chew and swallow if they are served with liquids such as gravy, broths, or sauces.
- If mouth or throat pain requires special medicine, it will be prescribed by the doctor.

Diet

- It is important that you eat enough calories and protein during your treatment to maintain your weight. You will be taught about this kind of diet.
- Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses of liquid each day (not including coffee or tea). Make sure to have liquids with your meals.
- You are encouraged to discuss any problem concerning side effects, diet, or any other aspects of your therapy with your doctor or nurse.

Notes:

Speak up if you have any questions or concerns