

19.3.2.1

Skin Care For Treatment Area During Radiation Therapy

It is common for your skin in the treatment area to become red during radiation therapy. This redness is a temporary side effect of radiation treatment.

Changes in your skin in the treatment area usually occur one to two weeks into treatment and may last one to two weeks after the last treatment. The amount of skin redness or irritation depends on the part of the body being treated and the dose of radiation.

Helpful Hints for Skin Care

- Apply moisturizers to the skin in the treatment area only if directed by the physicians or therapists. Do not use moisturizers within two hours before your radiation treatment. Moisturizers work best when applied just after bathing, while the skin is damp. Continue to moisturize your skin in the treatment area at least a month after treatments are completed and then as needed.
- Protect the skin in and around the treatment area from very hot or cold temperatures, especially in the summer and winter. Use soft, lightweight clothing to cover the treated area.
- Avoid exposing the treatment area to the sun during treatment and for at least 1 year after your treatment is completed. If you expect to be in the sun for more than a few minutes you must be very careful. Wear protective clothing such as a hat with a broad brim and a shirt with long sleeves and use a sunscreen.
- Do not use a heating pad, hot water bottle, or ice pack on the treatment area.
- Always protect the treated area from chemicals, such as cleaning products that can cause irritation.
- Bathe or shower only once a day and for short periods of time, just long enough to cleanse yourself. Use warm water, rather than hot, to prevent your skin from becoming dry.
- Use a mild soap that does not contain perfume, fragrances, or deodorants.
- After bathing, pat the skin dry rather than rubbing it, especially at the treatment site.
- Be careful while washing not to wash off any marks drawn on your skin for treatment purposes. If this should happen, be sure to inform the therapist.
- In the laundry, avoid starch as well as harsh or heavily perfumed detergents.
- Check the skin at the treatment site daily. Report any changes to your therapist.
- Avoid hot tubs, whirlpool baths, or the Jacuzzi.
- Avoid tanning/sun beds during the course of Radiation Treatments.
- Deodorant not recommended under treatment area of breast being treated (This is for breast patients only) Naturally Fresh Deodorant Crystal may be used. This is available over-the counter at most pharmacies and discount stores.

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