Hair Loss
During Radiation Therapy

Radiation Therapy can cause hair loss, but only in the area being treated. For example, if you are receiving treatment to your hip, you will not lose the hair from your head. However, radiation therapy to your head may cause you to lose some or all of the hair on your scalp. Many patients find that the hair grows back again after treatments are finished, but accepting the loss of hair, whether from scalp, face or body can be a hard adjustment. Other types of treatment, such as chemotherapy, can also affect how your hair grows back. Typically, re-growth of hair begins 6 to 8 weeks after completion of radiation therapy. A dry irritated scalp is a temporary condition and will begin to improve about two weeks after treatment is complete. As needed, skincare recommendation are prescribed to relieve discomfort and itching.

Following are some recommendations for coping with hair loss and minimize scalp irritation:

- Once radiation treatments begin, use a mild shampoo, pat the hair dry, comb the hair carefully without tugging, and avoid excessive combing or brushing.
- Avoid using heat sources such as hair dyes, rollers, curling irons or perms.
- Consider scarves, turbans, or wigs. If you prefer a wig or toupee, be sure the lining does not irritate your scalp. If considering a wig, see a wig stylist before treatment begins so that the stylist can match a wig to your natural hair color and texture. Ask your doctor for a prescription for a wig, as some insurance companies will cover this cost.
- You should wear a protective cap or scarf when you are in the sun, cold, or wind. Sunscreen is recommended.
- Avoid perming or coloring your hair during treatment.

Written: 2007
Reviewed: 2008
Revised: 2012