Late Side Effects: *Those that happen months or years after treatment*

**More Common...**

**Chronic change in bowel habits**
- Intermittent diarrhea
- Change in stool frequency

**Changes in Sexual Function**
- Erectile dysfunction (*50% risk*)
- Vaginal dryness and sexual discomfort
- Ovarian function loss, menopause (*100% risk*)

**Rare (less than 5%)...**

**Scarring**
- Pelvic scarring
  - Makes future pelvic surgeries more difficult
- Intestines/bowel damage (*<5% risk*)
  - Causes bleeding, stricture, or obstruction
- May require surgery (colostomy)
- Anus scarring (if the anus is treated)
  - Poor anal function resulting in incontinence

**Weakening of Pelvic Bones (<3% risk)**
- Slightly increased risk of fracture
Radiation Treatment
· It is important to lay still and breathe normally
· The treatment cannot be seen, felt or smelled
· You will not be radioactive after treatment
· Each appointment takes about 15mins
· It is important to follow therapists' instructions

Treatment Preparation
Bladder Preparation
· 1 hr. before treatment empty your bladder
· Immediately drink 500ml of water
· Do not empty your bladder before treatment
· Do this each day before treatment
· Please notify a radiation therapist if you have problems keeping your bladder full

Side Effects of Treatment
Acute Side Effects: Those that happen during or shortly after treatment
Bladder Changes
· Frequent urination or burning during urination
· Drink plenty of clear fluids

Rectal Discomfort
· Anus irritation may cause a hemorrhoid flare
· Keep the area exposed to air
· Sitz baths may ease discomfort

Directions for Sitz Baths
Fill bath with warm water (about 5 inches)
Add ½ cup baking soda and stir to dissolve
Sit in the water for 10-15 minutes
Repeat 2-4 times daily or as needed

Bowel Changes
· Urgency
· The sensation you need to have a bowel movement but nothing comes out
· Can be managed with suppositories
· Diarrhea
· Use Imodium as per package directions
· Limit high fiber, fatty and fried foods
· Drink plenty of clear fluids
· Gas & Cramping
· Avoid carbonated drinks & chewing gum
· Avoid gaseous foods like turnip, onions, peas

Hair Loss
· Temporary and occurs in the treatment field

Skin Irritation
· Avoid rubbing or scratching the irritated area
· Mild unscented soap is recommended
· Pat or air dry after a shower or bath
· Avoid creams or lotions in the treatment area
· Avoid ice packs and heating pads in treatment area

Fatigue
· You may feel tired 3-4 weeks into treatment
· Rest when needed
· Eat a balanced diet, drink plenty of clear fluids

Late Side Effects...