

Radiation Therapy – Breast/Chestwall

Radiation Treatment

- It is a painless treatment. It is similar to getting an x-ray but with a higher energy to treat cancer.
- Each treatment takes about 15 minutes.
- You will need to lie still and breathe normally.

Possible Side Effects

Always discuss new side effects with your radiation oncology team.

Skin reaction

- Skin in the treatment area may develop redness 2-3 weeks into treatment.
- Only use creams that have been suggested or prescribed by your radiation team. Do not apply them on the treatment area at least 2 hrs before your treatment.
- When bathing, use a mild unscented soap and pat or air dry the treatment area.
- Do not shave or wear deodorant or cosmetics on affected side.
- Choose a bra with no underwire or wear no bra at all.
- Avoid scratching or rubbing the skin.
- Avoid direct sunlight and extreme temperatures such as heating pads and ice packs.
- Avoid dry bandages on the irritated skin.
- Use a saline compress to help clean and soothe irritated skin. Do not use Epsom salts.

Saline Compress Recipe:

- Heat 1L of water to boiling and remove from heat
- Add 1.5-2 tsp of table salt and stir until dissolved
- Cover and leave at room temperature to cool
- Make fresh each evening

How to use:

- Wash hands
- Place gauze or clean facecloth in clean bowl and cover with solution
- Lay gauze/facecloth on area for 10-15 minutes
- Pat area dry
- Repeat as often as required

Breast Changes

- You may have a feeling of breast fullness, heaviness or tenderness.

Fatigue

- You may notice a decrease in energy level
- Listen to your body and rest when you needed
- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of clear fluids
- Continue physical activity as you can tolerate

Lymphedema

- Radiation may increase the *possibility* of lymphedema while on treatment or after treatment has ended.
- You may experience swelling in the arm, breast or skin of the chestwall on the affected side.
- Inform your radiation team if you notice any changes in your arm, breast or chestwall.
- If you develop lymphedema you may be referred to the cancer clinic lymphedema program.

Possible Late Side Effects (can happen months or years after treatment)

Skin changes in treatment area

- Skin can become firm, dry or darkened in color.
- Fine blood vessels may appear.

Radiation Appointments

Radiation treatments are scheduled Monday-Friday, except on holidays.

You will be scheduled for a *Radiation Review Appointment* weekly when you begin your treatments. At this appointment you may see a nurse, nurse practitioner, physician or radiation oncologist.

Important Contact Information

General Directory

(709) 777-6480

Daffodil Place

(709) 753-6520 or toll free 1-888-753-6520

Extended Stay St. John's

(709) 777-6831 or 6832

Cancer Patient Navigators

St. John's	(709) 777-2094/2368	Clarenville	(709) 466-5763
Central	(709) 256-5571	Western	(709) 784-5010
St. Anthony	(709) 454-3999	Toll free:	(855) 848-3888

Look Good Feel Better Program (www.lgfb.ca)

Eastern	(709) 777-6480
Central	(709) 489-5822
Western	(709) 634-6542

Going to miss an appointment?

Please call (709) 777-8206

**Please visit the Eastern Health Cancer Care website for more information
cancercare.easternhealth.ca**