

Radiation Therapy – Rectum/Anal Canal

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.

Bladder Preparation

If you are required to have a full bladder:

- Drink 500 mL of water and have it finished an hour before your appointment time.
- Do not empty your bladder an hour before you arrive for your appointment.
- Notify a staff member if you have problems keeping your bladder full.

Bowel Preparation

If you are required to have an empty rectum:

- Try to have a bowel movement everyday ideally before your radiation treatment.

Possible Side Effects

Always discuss new side effects with your radiation oncology team.

Bladder changes

- Frequency and burning on urination
- Weak urinary flow
- Increased urgency (immediate need to urinate)
- Drink plenty of clear fluids

Rectal urgency

- Sensation to move bowels often.
- You may be prescribed suppositories.

Bowel changes: diarrhea, gas and cramping

- Do not change your diet unless advised by your health care team.
- You may be advised to take anti-diarrhea or anti-gas medication.
- Drink plenty of clear fluids.

Anal discomfort/irritation

- May cause a hemorrhoid flare.
- Keep the area exposed to air.
- Sitz baths may ease discomfort – you can do this 2-4 times daily or as needed.
 - 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

Fatigue

- You may notice a decrease in energy level. Listen to your body and rest when needed.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of clear fluids.

Vaginal irritation

- Discharge, bleeding or dryness within the vagina.
- Discomfort with intercourse.

Skin reaction

- Use a mild unscented soap and after bathing pat or air dry the treatment area.
- Temporary hair loss may occur in the treatment area.
- Avoid creams unless advised by your healthcare team.
- Avoid scratching the treatment area.
- Avoid extreme temperatures such as heating pads and ice packs.

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

- Chronic change in bowel habits
- Erectile dysfunction
- Vaginal narrowing, dryness and sexual discomfort
- Loss of ovarian function, menopause (100% risk)
- Weakening of pelvic bones

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	Clareville	(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**