

Radiation Therapy – Skin

Radiation Treatment

- Treatment is painless - is similar to getting an x-ray but with higher energy to treat cancer.
- Each treatment takes about 15 minutes - it is important 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/prescribed and do not apply it on the treatment area at least 2 hours before radiation.
- Use a mild unscented soap and pat or air dry the treatment area after bathing.
- Temporary hair loss in treatment area.
- Use an electric razor if you have to shave.
- Avoid direct sunlight on the treatment area and extreme temperatures such as heating pads/ice packs.
- Avoid scratching or rubbing the skin.
- Avoid cosmetics on treatment area.
- 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

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

Nose soreness and dryness

- You may be advised to use an unscented water-based cream, nasal lubricant, spray or rinse.
- Avoid blowing the nose or putting tissues in the nose.
- A cool mist humidifier may help with dryness.

Mouth soreness and dryness

- Drink clear fluids, especially water, while eating.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Use a soft or extra-soft bristled toothbrush.
- Eat soft foods with sauces or gravies to ease swallowing.
- A mouthwash may be prescribed; do not use commercial mouthwash.

Fatigue

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

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

- Skin changes - occurs in the area where the radiation was given.
- Skin is firm, dry, or darkened in color.
- Can also have permanent loss of hair in the treatment area.
- 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**