

Skin Care During Radiation Therapy

During radiation therapy, you may notice some skin changes in the area being treated. Your skin may:

- › Slowly redden, tan or darken
- › Become dry and peel

If you have any questions, please talk with a member of your care team.

The following steps can help ease any discomfort and protect the skin from further irritation. During therapy:


- › Clean the area with unscented bath soap made for sensitive skin. Avoid using soaps that are scented or antibacterial.
- › Use lukewarm water on the area. Hot water can further irritate the skin.
- › When drying your skin, gently pat dry. Do not rub the area.
- › Do not shave the skin in the area being treated.
- › Do not use heating pads or ice packs on the area. Extreme temperatures can damage the skin being treated.

Your doctor or nurse may also suggest a special moisturizing cream.

Do not put any cream on your skin within 2 hours before your treatment.

Doing so can cause your skin to be more sensitive to the effects of radiation. You may apply a moisturizing cream to the affected area 2 to 3 times per day.

Your team may use ink pen marks or tape to identify the treatment areas. Use extra care when washing. Do not remove the tape or the marks. If the marks start to fade, tell your therapist. Do not redraw them yourself. If you are allergic to tape, tell your therapist or nurse.



When choosing clothes, certain fabrics like wool might irritate your skin. We recommend wearing cotton or soft knit fabrics.

Swelling in the treated area can happen. To control swelling:

- › Avoid sleeping on the same side as the treatment area.
- › Eat less salt.

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