

Radiation Treatment Information for Patients with Bladder Cancer

This information will help prepare you and your caregiver for your treatment.

What to Expect

You will receive external beam radiation therapy, a noninvasive treatment.

Side Effects

Some people will develop side effects that usually occur within 1 – 3 weeks following the start of radiation therapy. The type of reaction and how severe they are will depend on many factors, including the dose of radiation, use of chemotherapy with radiation, and number of treatments prescribed by your provider. These factors include:

- Mild fatigue is common during treatment.
- Diarrhea and rectal discomfort may occur. Infrequently, patients also experience pain and/or bleeding after radiation.
- Bladder or urinary discomfort may occur 2 – 4 weeks after the start of treatment. A feeling of urgency and frequent urination with a mild burning sensation is possible.
- Skin changes are uncommon.
- Sexual function can be decreased in about half of men that are treated.

Please discuss problems or concerns about side effects or any part of your treatment with your doctor, nurse, or therapist.

Care

Avoid or minimize bladder irritants, such as diet sodas or caffeinated drinks and minimize hydration at night time if you are having night time urinary frequency.

If you have diarrhea, simplify your diet by avoiding insoluble fibers (i.e. raw greens) and high fatty foods. If you have these issues, we can make an appointment for you to talk to our radiation oncology dietitian. You should talk to our dietitian for more advice.

Do not use moisturizers within 4 hours **before** your radiation treatment.

Avoid tanning or burning your skin during and after treatment.

Avoid extreme temperature to the area being treated, including:

- Hot tubs
- Water bottles
- Heating pads
- Ice packs

Swimming is permitted **only if**:

- You **do not** have any skin reactions during your treatment
- Pool is chlorinated

Rinse off chlorine right after getting out of pool.

A daily vitamin is OK during your treatment. **Do not** take other vitamins or any supplements, including both nutritional and herbal supplements, without talking to your doctor.

Caution

- Heating pads and/or very hot water can cause pain or skin irritation to the treatment area.
- Hot tubs or saunas are not encouraged while receiving radiation treatment.
- **Do not** use products with alcohol, including alcohol pads, on your skin in the area being treated.
- **Do not** use makeup, perfumes, or powders in the area being treated.

Contact your nurse or doctor if you experience:

- Bowel problems, including diarrhea and cramping, bleeding, and/or discharge
- Pain, unusual odor, spasms, bleeding, or burning during urination
- Frequent urination
- Red, swollen, blistering, or tender areas of skin
- Any new or unusual symptoms

Call immediately if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.5°F or above
- Chills

Contact Us

You can reach your doctor/nurse 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday-Friday at 214-645-8525. You can also call this number after hours with any emergent questions/concerns.