

# End of Lower Gastrointestinal Treatment Frequently Asked Questions



## Post-Treatment Appointments

Please follow up with other members of your health care team involved in your cancer care. You will be given a follow-up appointment to see your radiation oncologist in a few weeks or months.

Please ensure that all imaging and labs are completed prior to your follow-up appointment with your radiation oncologist.

## Side Effects and Symptom Management

- Symptoms related to your treatment may last for weeks or months after your treatment is complete.
- Your symptoms may initially worsen but will gradually improve over the next few weeks.
- Common post-treatment side effects include:
  - **Diarrhea, constipation, and urinary issues:** Diarrhea and constipation are not uncommon after completion of treatment. You may experience pain and/or burning with stools or urination. Please use over-the-counter and/or prescription medications as needed.
  - **Pain** may worsen the week after radiation but will gradually improve over the next few weeks.
  - **Fatigue:** Take rest periods and get plenty of sleep during your recovery period.
  - **Rectal irritation:** Skin around the rectal area may worsen the week after radiation but will gradually improve over the next few weeks.
  - **Vaginal changes:** After radiation you may develop some scar tissue in the vagina. This scar tissue could cause your vagina to shorten and close. The use of dilators can help with this.

*If any of your symptoms worsen, do not improve, or you experience new symptoms, contact the clinic via MyChart message or call your radiation oncology nurse for further direction at **214-645-8525**.*

### Diet

- A well-balanced diet and adequate water intake are essential to your recovery after radiation therapy.
- If you require supplemental nutrition, please follow your dietitian's guidelines.
- Please check with your oncology team before you resume your vitamins and supplements that were discontinued prior to treatment.

### Exercise

- Safe levels of exercise can assist you with your recovery after radiation therapy.
- Before exercising, please check first with your physician.

### Medications

- Never stop or change your medications without consulting your doctor first.
- Review your current prescription status and whether any refills are necessary.

## Emotional Well-Being

Every person reacts differently to treatment. You may experience anxiety, depression, anger, frustration, fear, or helplessness. If you start to experience severe depression or suicidal thoughts, please seek immediate medical attention.

***Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255***

***Crisis Text Line: Text CONNECT to 741741***

### Notes:

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