

# Lymphoma and Myeloma

This information will help prepare you and your caregiver for your treatment. The different types of lymphoma are:

- Hodgkin lymphoma
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Cutaneous lymphoma (lymphoma of the skin)
- Multiple myeloma and plasmacytoma

## What is Lymphoma?

Lymphoma is a type of cancer that starts in the cells of the body's immune system, typically lymph nodes. Knowing which type of lymphoma you have is important because it will affect your treatment options. Be sure to ask your provider.

## What is Myeloma?

Myeloma is a type of cancer that starts in the bone marrow. Plasmacytomas are tumors made up of myeloma cells. The role of radiation in the treatment of myeloma is typically palliative, to help with pain or other symptoms you may have.

## Radiation Therapy and What to Expect

Radiation therapy utilizes high energy particles or waves, such as x-rays, gamma rays, electron beams, or protons to destroy or damage cancer cells. Radiation works by making a small break in the DNA inside the cells. These breaks will keep the cells from growing and dividing ultimately causing them to die. Radiation therapy is typically provided in one of two different ways:

- **External Radiation (external beam radiation):** A machine that will direct high-energy rays from outside the body into the tumor; this is done during outpatient visits and is given over many weeks or at times twice a day for several weeks. A person receiving external radiation is not radioactive and does not have to follow special safety precautions at home.
- **Internal Radiation:** Internal radiation, also called brachytherapy, is where a radioactive source is put inside the body into or near the tumor. With some types of brachytherapy, radiation might be placed and left in the body to work. Sometimes it is placed in the body for a period of time and then removed; this is decided on the type of cancer. Special safety precautions are needed for this type of radiation for a period of time. It is important to know if the internal radiation is left in the body, as after a while it eventually is no longer radioactive.

## Side Effects

- Fatigue
- Skin irritation (red, irritated, swollen, blistered, sunburned, or tanned)
- Hair thinning or loss
- Low blood counts
- Diarrhea or constipation

Nausea and/or possible side effects vary depending on your lymphoma or myeloma type and treatment location.

## Caution

- Report any skin changes to your doctor, nurse, or therapist
- 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 areas being treated
- **DO NOT** use makeup, perfumes, or powders in the area being treated

## Care

Bathe and shower using warm water and mild unscented soap such as Dove<sup>®</sup>, Cetaphil<sup>®</sup>, or baby soap.

- **DO NOT** use a washcloth, scrubbing cloth, or brush when bathing
- Pat skin dry with a soft towel or allow to air dry
- **DO NOT** use moisturizers within 4 hours before your radiation treatment
- **DO NOT** dye your hair or use color treatment products (i.e. color treatment shampoos and conditioners)
- Avoid tanning or burning your skin during and after treatment
- Avoid extreme temperatures to the area being treated (hot tubs, heating pads, ice packs)
- 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 physician

### Contact your medical team immediately for:

- Altered mental status
- Change in speech
- Problems with balance
- Headaches that do not go away with Tylenol<sup>®</sup>
- Sudden weakness to the left or right side
- Blurry/double vision
- Numbness/tingling to extremities
- Persistent nausea and vomiting

## Contact Us

For any questions or concerns, please reach out to the radiation oncology clinic on MyChart or call **214-645-8525**.