

New Connections

HELPING YOU FIND YOUR WAY AFTER TREATMENT



Issue 21

*Help for
skin problems
caused by
radiation therapy.*



Most people experience redness and irritation on the treatment site. At the very least, the skin will look sunburned or tanned. Sometimes, after a few weeks, the skin may also become dry, scaly, and even redder.

Don't be discouraged. Most skin reactions should go away a few weeks after treatment is over. In some cases, however, the treated skin will remain darker than it was before. Remember to be gentle with your skin.

It's always important to let your doctor or nurse know about skin changes. They can suggest measures to relieve your discomfort and possibly lessen further irritation. Following are some of the suggestions your health care team may offer:

- Use only lukewarm water and mild soap. Just let water run over the treated area. Do not rub.
- Do not wear tight clothing over the treatment area.
- Try not to rub, scrub, or scratch any sensitive spots.
- Avoid putting anything that is hot or cold, such as heating pads or ice packs, on your treated skin, unless advised to do so by your doctor.
- Ask your doctor or nurse before using any powders, creams, perfumes, deodorants, body oils, ointments, lotions, or home remedies in the area while you are being treated and for several weeks afterward. Many skin products can leave a coating on the skin that may cause irritation, and may even change the dose of radiation going into the body.
- Avoid exposing the area to the sun during treatment and for at least one year after your treatment is completed. Use sunscreen, but be sure to ask your healthcare team about products appropriate for people who've had radiation therapy. See the article on Sun Protection in this issue for more information.

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