

Managing Radiation Side Effects

What To Do About Mild Skin Changes

Take these steps to care for your skin in the treatment area:

Check with your doctor or nurse before you put anything on your skin.

- Look at the list of skin products on the back of this sheet. Ask your doctor or nurse which ones are okay for you to use.

Protect your skin.

Make sure your clothing covers the area being treated when you are outside.

- Wear clothes that are loose.
- Choose clothes and bed sheets made of soft cotton.
- Use an electric razor if your doctor or nurse says you can shave.

Care for your skin.

- Shower or bathe with warm, not hot, water. Don't shower more than one time a day.
- If you bathe, limit baths to two times a week. Bathe for less than 30 minutes.
- Gently pat your skin dry after showers or baths.
- Don't rub off the markings your radiation therapist made on your skin. They show where to place the radiation.
- Don't use heating pads, ice packs, or bandages on the area getting radiation.
- Don't use tanning beds. Take this list with you to your doctor visit.

Tell your doctor or nurse if your skin stays wet or if you have sores.

Ask your doctor or nurse to check and write in the brand name of the products that are okay to use.

- Bubble bath _____
- Cornstarch _____
- Deodorant _____
- Makeup _____
- Ointment _____
- Perfume _____
- Powder _____
- Shaving cream _____
- Skin cream or lotion _____
- Soap _____
- Sunscreen _____

Ask your doctor or nurse about the best time to put on lotion or other skin products.

Watch out for a more serious skin problem (moist reaction). If your skin hurts in the area where you get treatment, tell your doctor or nurse. Your skin might have a moist reaction. Most often this happens in areas where the skin folds, such as behind the ears or under the breasts. It can lead to an infection if not properly treated. Ask your doctor or nurse how to care for these areas.

For more information and helpful videos, visit echoassociates.org/education

Source: National Cancer Institute

