

Taking care of your skin during radiation treatments (superficial treatment)

During your radiation treatments, you may develop a skin reaction in the treatment area. Your skin may become tender, dry, itchy and appear pink or red in colour.

Most skin reactions begin in the second week of treatment and develop gradually. How your skin reacts to radiation depends on:

- your skin type
- your planned treatment
- the amount and type of radiation
- number of radiation treatments

Taking care of your skin can help lessen any skin reaction you may experience. Please follow these instructions during your radiation treatments.

Washing

- Wash daily with warm water during shower or bath.
- Use a mild non-deodorant soap over skin such as Dove.
- Wash gently and pat the skin dry with a soft cotton towel.
- Be gentle in areas where there are skin folds.
- Avoid scratching and scrubbing the skin in the area being treated.

Protection

- Protect the treated skin from all sources of heat or cold. Avoid hot water bottles, heating pads, ice packs and sun and wind exposure.
- Glaxal base lotion is recommended to moisturize the intact skin in the treatment area unless told otherwise.
- Do not use any other cream, lotions and sprays on the treated area unless recommended by your Radiation Oncologist.
- Avoid using sunscreen on the treated area while on treatment.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat if the treated area is on the head or neck.

Prevention

- Wear loose-fitting clothing made of soft material such as cotton, over the area being treated.
- Avoid placing adhesive tape or bandages on the treated skin.

After your treatments

Your skin reaction from the radiation may continue after your treatments are finished. The treated area may be dry and will always be more sensitive to the sun. Please follow the above instructions for at least 3 weeks after the completion of your treatments.

Also, when outdoors, keep the area covered or use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30, with UVA and UVB protection.

Concerns

Your Radiation Therapist, Nurse or Oncologist will check any skin changes that you may have during your treatments. Please tell us your concerns.