

## Your care during radiation therapy to the esophagus / stomach

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### Your appointments

- Please arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your appointment time.
- At the Level 0 reception desk, scan the barcode on your radiation schedule or check in with the receptionist, then go to the waiting area closest to your treatment unit.
- Appointments are every day, Monday to Friday. There are no scheduled treatments on the weekends or holidays. Appointments are not the same time everyday.
- Your treatment may be over several days or weeks and may start on any day of the week. We will give you a schedule of your treatment appointments.

### Treatment appointment changes

Your schedule may change while you are on treatment. We will try to give you as much notice as possible.



If you are unable to attend or will be late, please call us at 905-387-9495, extension 63600 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

If you are unwell, please call your Primary Team.

### Questions

If you have questions about your schedule, treatments or side effects, please ask your Radiation Therapist.

## Your review appointments

- You will meet with a health care provider on a regular basis to check how you are doing. This may or may not be your doctor.
- When you come for each appointment, please complete a symptom assessment. You will be asked to rate different symptoms about how you are feeling along with your activity level. You can complete the Symptom Assessment at home on-line <https://isaac.cancercare.on.ca/> or on a touch screen computer at the JCC.
- By completing a Symptom Assessment you will help us understand how you are feeling. Together we can discuss what you need help with most and offer help.

## Patient Assessment Office

- If you have concerns or problems related to radiation treatment on a day that you do not have a review appointment, you can see a nurse in the Patient Assessment Office (next to Clinic G). Your radiation therapist may direct or recommend that you go to the Patient Assessment Office.
- If your radiation treatment appointment is late in the day (after 4:00 pm), and you wish to see a nurse, you are welcome to arrive early. After you check in, walk over to the treatment area and speak with a therapist who will then direct you to the Patient Assessment Office.

## While on treatment

- Treatment appointments are 10 to 30 minutes long. Most of the time is spent getting ready for treatment. The actual time the radiation beam is usually less than a few minutes each day.
  - When you arrive in the radiation unit, you may need to change into a hospital gown.
  - During treatment, you will not feel the radiation at all. The therapist will guide you into the planned position and you will need to lie still and breathe as instructed.
  - During treatment, the radiation therapists leave the room, but will watch you on a TV screen and speak with you by intercom. You can signal a Therapist by calling out or waving your hand.
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## Side effects

The side effects you have will depend on:

- your general health
- any other treatments you may have had or are having
- the location of your tumour or lesion
- the number of radiation treatments



Your health care team will check for side effects.

Please tell them your concerns.

Most side effects begin during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of treatment. They can gradually develop through treatment and continue after your treatments are done. You may have these side effects:

- tiredness (your tiredness may worsen for a week or so after treatment), drowsiness, wanting to sleep most of the time
- a cough
- loss of appetite
- increase difficulty in swallowing, sensation of sticking in the throat
- painful swallowing
- increase mucous production
- skin irritation, only in the treatment area. The skin in the treatment area may remain dry and sensitive for some time. It is possible that some skin changes may be permanent.
- burping, nausea, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, flatulence (gas)



If your cough changes and you begin to cough up green mucous or blood contact your doctor.

If you develop sudden chest pain, severe shortness of breath or a temperature of 38°C (100°F) or higher go to the Emergency Department.

## Take care of yourself

Please follow these instructions during your radiation treatments and for about 2 weeks after treatments are done.

- Do not rub, scratch or scrub the area being treated.
- Gently wash the skin in the treatment area with warm water and a mild non-deodorant soap such as Dove or baby soap while bathing or taking a shower.
- Gently pat dry with a soft towel.
- Protect the treated skin from all sources of hot or cold such as hot water bottles, heating pads, ice packs or saunas. Protect the skin from direct sunlight or harsh cold.
- Do not use creams or lotions on the treatment area unless directed by your health care team.

## Activity and eating

- Your tiredness may continue for a while after treatment.
- Take rest periods during the day if needed and pace your activities.
- Eat and drink to keep your nutritional and energy levels up.
- It is important to keep moving. Talk with your primary team before increasing your physical activity or swimming.



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