

Your care during radiation therapy to the skin

Your radiation treatment 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 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.
- 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, ext. 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, speak with a therapist who will then direct you to the Patient Assessment Office.
- You can always call your Primary Team with your concerns.

While on treatment

- When you arrive in the radiation unit, you may need to change into a hospital gown.
 - Treatment appointments are 10 to 30 minutes long. Most of the time is spent getting ready for treatment. The actual time of the radiation beam is usually a few minutes each day.
 - A therapist will guide you into the planned position and you will need to lie still and breathe as instructed. You will not feel the radiation at all. The machine makes a humming noise when treatment is being delivered.
 - 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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Skin reactions

Most skin reactions begin in the second week of treatment and develop gradually. Your skin may become tender, dry, itchy and appear pink or red in colour. It may remain dry and sensitive for some time. How your skin reacts to radiation depends on:

- your skin type
- the area being treated
- the amount and type of radiation
- number of radiation treatments



Your health care team will check for skin changes that you may have during treatment.

Please tell them your concerns.

Take care of your skin

Taking care of your skin can help lessen any skin reaction you may have, please:

- Leave the treated area open to air as much as possible.
- Do not rub, scratch, or scrub the skin being treated.
- Gently wash your skin with warm water and a mild non-deodorant soap such as Dove or baby soap.
- Gently pat the area dry with a soft towel.
- If the area being treated is on your scalp, wash your hair gently with warm water and baby shampoo.
- Do not use any creams, lotions and powders on the treatment area unless directed by your health care team.
- Do not put adhesive tape or bandaids on the treatment area.
- Use Polysporin (antibiotic that you can buy at the drug store) on open areas as directed by your health care team.

Take care of your skin (continued)

- Wear loose-fitting clothing made of soft material such as cotton over the area, if applicable.
- Protect the treated area from all sources of heat or cold such as hot water bottles, heating pads, ice packs or saunas.
- Continue to take care of your skin for 2 to 3 weeks after treatments or until the reaction starts to go away or fade.

Activity and eating

- If you experience tiredness it may increase for a week after treatment but should gradually go away. Rest when needed, and pace your activities.
- Talk with your primary team before swimming or increasing your physical activity.
- Eat and drink to keep your nutritional and energy levels up. Changes in what you eat may be needed.

Sun and skin after treatment

- It will sunburn more easily than the rest of your skin. Protect the skin from cold, wind and sun.
- If necessary, cover the area with a soft scarf or a wide brimmed hat.
- When the skin is uncovered, use a sunscreen with SPF 30 or more and UVA/UVB protection.



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