



# Treatment Guidelines

## Brain

The information that you find here is to help you know what to expect during your treatment. It also helps you to learn ways to deal with any side effects that you may have. Please ask a member of the treatment team (doctor, nurse, technologist and nutritionist) to answer any of your questions.

### Introduction

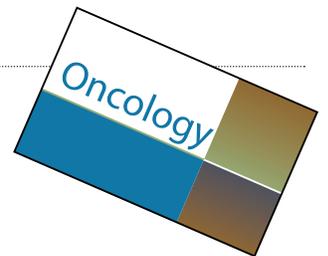
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Radiation therapy side effects vary from person to person. The side effects depend on several things such as the area of the body to be treated, the type of radiation used, the amount of radiation, whether you are having chemotherapy at the same time and your general health.

### Oncology Passport

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This is your tool to write information and keep track of your diagnosis, treatment, possible symptoms and resources. Please bring it with you everyday.



### Treatment Set Up

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- The technologist will apply a mask for your treatments.

### Will the radiation therapy affect my skin?

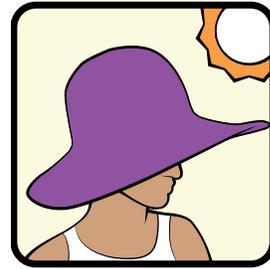
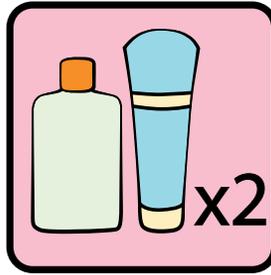
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- When radiation is given it passes through the skin to reach the area to be treated. Skin problems are an expected side effect for people who receive radiation therapy. The skin might become dry, itchy, red or darker in color and sometimes peel or weep.
- Depending on the dose of therapy, you will not lose hair except to the area that is receiving treatment.

## How should I care for my skin during treatment?

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- You can wash your hair or scalp with mild baby shampoo during your treatment. This can help to soothe any itchiness.
- You can use unscented lotion such as Lubriderm® or Aveeno® twice daily on your skin.
- Do not apply lotion to the skin being treated for at least 4 hours before treatment.
- Do not rub, scrub, or scratch your skin.
- Avoid extreme hot or cold water on area being treated since it can make the skin reaction worse.
- Protect area of treatment from sunlight or cold and wind in winter.
- Wear sunscreen (SPF 30 or greater) when outdoors when treatment ends. Keep those areas of the skin covered if you must sit or stand in direct sunlight.



## What other side effects can happen? What are some ways to deal with them?

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### Fever

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- Notify us if you develop a fever of 101°F or 38.3 °C or higher.

### Neurological effects

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Notify us if you develop any of the following:

- Headaches
- Hearing problems (muffled hearing)
- Weakness or numbness of hands or feet
- Seizure activity
- Change in behavior

## Nausea and vomiting

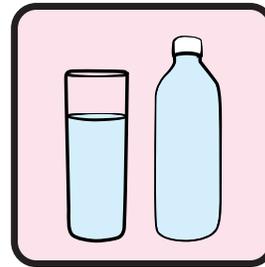
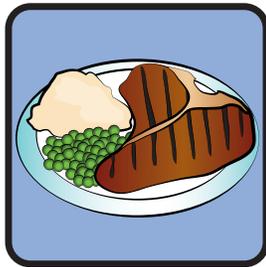
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- Radiation or chemotherapy may change how foods taste or may cause you to lose your appetite; you can also have nausea.
- Eat smaller and more frequent meals.
- Your doctor may prescribe medication to help you deal with nausea and vomiting.

## Nutrition concerns

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- Do not attempt to lose weight during treatment since nutrition is important for healing.
- Eat balanced healthy meals to help improve and maintain energy and strength.
- Drink plenty of water.



## Will I feel tired?

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- Fatigue or a feeling of tiredness is a common side effect and can continue for several months after radiation therapy ends.
- If you are tired, then take naps or rest periods as needed.
- Continue your regular activities but limit yourself when you feel tired. Listen to your body.
- Have a friend or family member come with you for support and to assist with driving and daily activities.
- Mild physical activity such as walking is encouraged and may be helpful to fight fatigue.
- Fatigue is also common among persons who are depressed or have difficulty to cope. Talk to your treatment team.



## What can I do if I feel overwhelmed?

- Feelings of anxiety, depression, anger, or of difficulty to cope are normal. Each person has a different way of dealing with difficult situations. Tell the team if you are having any of these feelings.
- We can offer you counseling with our Psychosocial Oncology Program.
- We can also offer information and/or referral for support, such as Can Support at MUHC or community based self-help groups.

## Where can I get information on the Internet?

Not all information found on the Internet is accurate or reliable. If you have access to the Internet and you would like more information on your cancer or its treatment, you can visit these reliable websites:

[www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) - Canadian Cancer Society

[www.fqc.qc.ca](http://www.fqc.qc.ca) - Fondation Québécoise du Cancer

[www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net) - American Society of Clinical Oncology

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov) - National Cancer Institute



## What should I do if I feel very sick or if there is an emergency?

Should you experience any serious reactions that are causing you to worry, please call your doctor or nurse

- Weekdays - tel: 514-934-1934 ext. 43400.
- During the weekend: call the MUHC switchboard - tel: 514- 934-1934 and ask for the Radiation Oncology Resident on Call.
- If your symptoms are particularly severe or you are unable to reach the Radiation Oncologist you should go to the emergency room of the nearest hospital and tell them you are receiving radiation therapy.

### IMPORTANT PLEASE READ

**Information provided by pamphlet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.**

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Patient Education Office

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