



# Treatment Guidelines

## Prostate

The information that you find here is to help you to 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 team (doctor, nurse, technologist and nutritionist) to answer any of your questions.

### Introduction

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

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



### Treatment Set Up

- The technologist may apply ink “markings” on your skin for your treatments.
- You can shower. Swimming or hot tubs need to be discussed with your doctor.

### Will the radiation therapy affect my skin?

- Radiation given to the prostate normally causes no skin problems.

### What should I avoid doing to my skin?

- Do not erase your markings when you wash your skin.

# What are the possible side effects?

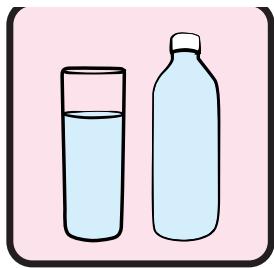
## Irritation or pain to the bladder:

Report any of the following symptoms to the team:

- Frequency (going more often)
- Urgency (an urge to go right away without time to wait)
- Urination at night (waking up often during the night with the need to go to the bathroom)
- Pain with urination

Here are some suggestions to help prevent burning and irritation in your bladder:

- Drink 1.5 to 2 liters per day including all liquids.
- Avoid more than 1 to 2 drinks of coffee, tea or caffeinated drinks.



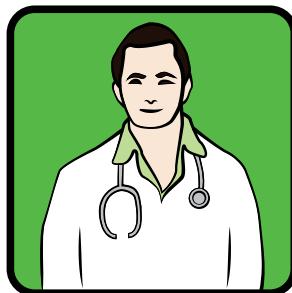
## Changes in bowel movements:

- A nutritionist will meet with you between the 2nd and 4th week of your treatment to discuss the types of food to eat and to teach you about a low residue diet.
- Do **not** attempt to lose weight during treatment since nutrition is important for healing.
- Changes in bowel movements, cramps, and gas vary from one person to another.
- Nausea or vomiting is not common but if this occurs please tell us.
- The doctor may also prescribe medication or give you special instructions to help with this side effect.
- Talk with your doctor about drinking alcohol during and after your treatment.



## Will I feel tired?

- 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.

## Fertility and sexuality

- During treatment your normal sexual life may continue unless side effects interfere.
- If you have concerns about your sexual life during treatment please discuss this with your radiation oncologist.



## Where can I get information on the Internet?

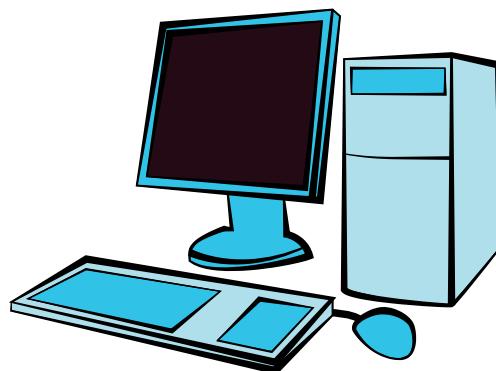
Not all information found on the Internet is accurate or reliable. If you have access to the Internet and you would like more information on your cancer or its treatment, you can visit these reliable websites:

[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.
- At night or 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.

### 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.**

This material was developed by MUHC Department of Radiation Oncology. We would like to thank the MUHC Patient Education Office for their support throughout the development of this material, including the writing, the design, layout, as well as for the creation of all the images. We would like to thank the MUHC Patient Education Committee for translation and printing support for this project.



Centre universitaire  
de santé McGill



McGill University  
Health Centre

Office d'éducation des patients  
Patient Education Office