



Energy Conservation

Keep a diary for one week to identify the time of day when you are either most fatigued or have the most energy. Note what you think may be contributing factors. There are several ways to conserve your energy.

Self-Care

- Use your energy on important tasks.
- Schedule rest. Frequent, short rests are beneficial.

Work

- Plan ahead and organize your work.
- Delegate tasks when needed.
- Combine activities and simplify details.

Pacing

- Balance periods of rest and work.
- Pace yourself. A moderate pace is better than rushing through activities.
- Avoid sudden movements or intense exercise.
- Alternate sitting and standing.

Body

- Practice proper body mechanics.
- Carry several small loads instead of one large one, or use a cart.
- Limit work that increases muscle tension.
- Breathe evenly; do not hold your breath.
- Wear comfortable clothes.
- When sitting, use a chair with good back support. Sit up with your back straight and your shoulders back.
- Avoid long, hot showers or baths.

Tools and Techniques

- Adjust the level of your work — work without bending.
- Limit work that requires reaching over your head.
- Store items lower.
- Use long-handled tools.

Environment

- Avoid temperature extremes.
- Eliminate smoke or harmful fumes.

The Southwest Difference

The diagnosis of cancer can be overwhelming. You and your loved ones may be facing many questions, medical treatment options and lifestyle changes.

At Southwest's Regional Cancer Center, we believe that superb cancer care goes beyond the latest technology and innovative treatments. We are here to help you and your loved ones keep the best quality of your life throughout your journey with cancer.

Cancer Support Group

360.514.2174

www.swmedicalcenter.org/cancersupport



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Regional Cancer Center
Cancer care for the whole person

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Managing Radiation Therapy Side Effects



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Cancer care for the whole person



Managing Radiation Therapy Side Effects

Side effects from radiation therapy are different for each part of the body being treated. The most common side effects are fatigue and skin irritation. Most side effects will not develop until ten to fourteen days into treatment and are typically temporary; however, some can last for several weeks after treatment. Your doctor or nurse will discuss with you the side effects that are specific to your treatment. This brochure discusses many of the side effects patients may experience.

Get help from Southwest's Radiation Oncology team at **360.514.1900**, or go to www.swmedicalcenter.org/radonc

Skin Reactions

Skin changes sometimes occur during therapy. These may include redness, increased pigmentation (tanning) or peeling. These reactions are expected and usually occur about two to three weeks after your initial treatment. They are usually temporary and should heal in time.



Avoid direct sunlight to the area being treated. Should it become necessary, a special skin ointment will be prescribed for you as a treatment for the reaction.

Don't apply ointments, salves, deodorants, colognes, cosmetics, heat or any self-remedies on the areas being treated during your radiation therapy, without discussing with your nurse or doctor. Also check with your nurse or doctor before using over-the-counter skin products since many contain alcohol or fragrance that may irritate your skin.

Fatigue

A feeling of fatigue is common during radiation therapy. Rest, relax and sleep when you feel tired or fatigued. Do not exhaust yourself with strenuous activity; however, we do recommend that you maintain some level of activity on a regular basis.

Hair Loss



Hair loss may occur within the area that is being treated. You should not lose hair on your head unless your head is receiving radiation therapy. Hair may be lost in its entirety or in patches. This is usually temporary but in rare cases may be permanent. Wear a hat or scarf on your head and use sunblock when you are in the sun.

Dry Mouth

Frequent mouth care, especially before meals, may provide some relief.

- Drink plenty of liquids to keep your mouth moist.
- Suck on sugarless candy or ice chips which may make your mouth feel more comfortable.
- Eat soft, well-cooked foods that contain butter, sauces or gravies.
- Apply lip balm to prevent drying or cracking.
- Some people may benefit from a saliva substitute. Discuss this with your doctor.

Since 2006, Southwest has offered the CyberKnife®, one of the most advanced radiosurgery systems in the world. Learn more at www.swmedicalcenter.org/cyberknife or call **360.514.CYBR (2927)**.

Mouth Sores

- Avoid irritants such as alcohol, spicy or acidic foods, tobacco, very hot foods and commercial mouthwashes.
- If you have dentures, remove and brush them thoroughly after meals.
- If your dentures are loose, ask your doctor when to have them adjusted, since your gums may remain inflamed during the treatment process.

Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting may occur if the abdomen is being treated. Your doctor may prescribe an anti-nausea medication prior to each treatment. Eat smaller, more frequent meals. Drink plenty of fluids.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea may be experienced if the abdomen or pelvis is being treated. An anti-diarrheal medication may be prescribed. Avoid roughage, raw fruits and vegetables, fried or highly seasoned foods. Drink six to eight glasses of fluids daily. Avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks.

Difficulty Swallowing

Your doctor may recommend a topical anesthetic, pain medication, artificial saliva and/or drinking sufficient fluids to keep the throat moist. It is important to maintain good nutrition during this time. Thin liquids, such as water or juice may be difficult to control while swallowing.

Painful Urination

This may occur when receiving treatment to the pelvis. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol, caffeine, citrus and carbonated beverages.