



RADIATION TREATMENT TO THE LUNG OR ESOPHAGUS

The following information will help manage the effects you may experience from your cancer treatment. Your treatment team will provide you with any additional information you need. Please ask them any questions you may have.

DURING YOUR TREATMENT

After two to three weeks of treatment, your throat and/or esophagus may become temporarily sore. Rinsing and gargling with a solution of 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1 teaspoon of baking soda in 1 quart of warm water may help reduce soreness, and is recommended before and after eating or at least four times a day. Your doctor will prescribe medication if needed.

Soreness of your throat and/or esophagus may make swallowing difficult. Take small bites of food and chew well before swallowing.

Liquid antacids after meals and at bedtime also reduce esophageal irritations. A special solution can be prescribed for you to relieve discomfort. Your doctor will prescribe pain medication if needed.

Many things can irritate the treated tissues and make side effects worse. During your course of treatment, you may need to avoid the following:

- Tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff, etc.)
- Alcohol
- Carbonated beverages
- Sharp-edged foods (pretzels, potato chips)
- Spicy, highly seasoned foods
- Very hot or cold beverages

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- Commercial mouthwashes that contain alcohol
- Acidic foods or liquids (orange juice, lemonade, tomatoes)
- Tough cuts of meats

Since it is important that you not lose weight during your course of treatment, your weight will be recorded every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. To maintain weight, try to eat five to six meals a day of high-protein foods such as soft meats, beans, milk shakes, eggs and cheese. For additional information, consult our nutritionist.

It is important that you drink a lot of fluids – try to drink at least one gallon of hydrating liquids daily, such as water and sport drinks. Limit caffeinated beverages to three glasses per day.

AFTER COMPLETION OF TREATMENT

If you develop any pain, fever, cough, tightness of the chest or shortness of breath, tell your doctor, radiation therapist or nurse.

For about two weeks after your final radiation treatment, avoid foods or beverages that irritate your throat or esophagus. If necessary, blend your food and moisten it with sauces, creams or other liquids. Avoid tobacco and alcohol use.

Maintain good nutrition and avoid losing weight to promote proper healing of treatment area.

AFTER HOURS

If you need immediate emergency medical attention, please dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. All other medical attention outside of the Center's regular office hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday) will be answered by our telephone answering service who will have a doctor from Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center return your call.

TELEPHONE:

Hammond: (985) 542-5000

Gonzales: (225) 644-1205

Baton Rouge: (225) 767-0847

Covington: (985) 875-2234

Houma: (985) 876-9045