



EXTERNAL RADIATION TREATMENT TO THE PELVIS FOR CANCER OF THE UTERUS, CERVIX, VAGINA, BLADDER AND RECTUM

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

DURING YOUR TREATMENT

Wear loose-fitting, soft underclothing.

Do not use a hot water bottle, heating pad or ice bag on treated skin.

It is important to drink a lot of fluids – try to drink at least two quarts of liquid daily.

Try to hold your urine as long as possible at least once each day. This will help keep your bladder capacity at a maximum.

Patients receiving treatment for cancer of the uterus, cervix or vagina may douche daily if there is no active bleeding. Use a solution of one tablespoon white vinegar to one quart warm water for comfort and hygiene. Report any bleeding to your doctor.

Frequency of urination, burning during urination or irritation of the skin around the genital area may occur. Some of these side effects may be relieved with medication, so please let your doctor, nurse or radiation therapist know if they develop.

If you develop abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or mucus in your stool, notify your doctor, nurse or radiation therapist. Some of these symptoms may be relieved by medication or diet. A dietitian is available to discuss your diet with you.

If you are being treated for cancer of the uterus, cervix, vagina or rectum, try to have a full bladder when each treatment is given. If you are being treated for bladder cancer, empty your bladder before each treatment.

Consult a doctor regarding sexual activity during your course of radiation therapy.

Do not scratch treated skin; applying pressure will help relieve itching.

AFTER COMPLETION OF TREATMENT

You may have a vaginal discharge for four to six weeks after your treatment is completed. Continue douching as needed until your first visit to see your Mary Bird Perkins – Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Center doctor. At that time, ask your doctor if you should continue to douche.

You may gradually return to your normal diet over the next two to three weeks. If diarrhea continues to be a problem, stay on a low residue diet and continue taking the medication prescribed for diarrhea. If diarrhea continues for more than four weeks after radiation therapy, notify your doctor.

Report to your doctor any persistent nausea or vomiting, any unusual problems with urination or bowel habits, bleeding, a temperature of more than 100° F or pain.

Continue to hold your urine as long as possible at least once a day until your first return appointment to Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center. At that time, ask your doctor if you should continue.

You may develop scar tissue in the vagina, causing it to shorten and narrow. It is important that your vagina remain open so that your cervix can be examined by your doctor. Your vagina can be kept open by regular sexual intercourse and/or using a plastic tube called a dilator. You will be examined before you are discharged by your doctor and if appropriate, you will be given a dilator and instructions.

Because the natural lubrication of your vagina may be reduced by the radiation, you may need to use a water soluble lubricant (such as K-Y Jelly®). Water soluble lubricants can be purchased over-the-counter at drugstores.

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