



**MARY BIRD PERKINS**  
CANCER CENTER™

# **RADIATION TREATMENT TO THE BREAST**

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

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## **DURING YOUR TREATMENT**

Wear only loose cotton clothing, such as a large cotton T-shirt, over the treated area.

After a mastectomy, avoid wearing a bra during your course of therapy. If one is worn, wear it loosely with light padding. If a mastectomy has not been done prior to radiation treatments, avoid wearing a bra. If one is worn, wear it loosely.

You may only use an electric razor under arm on the treated side. Check with your nurse or therapist for approved deodorant or powder to use on the treated side.

Wash with a mild soap and your hand, not a washcloth. After washing, pat treated skin dry with a soft towel.

If certain exercises have been prescribed by your surgeon, continue them throughout the course of your radiation therapy.

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## **DO NOT:**

- Use very hot or cold water.
- Use a heating pad, hot water bottle or ice pack on the treated skin.

- Scratch treated skin; applying pressure will help relieve itching.

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## **AFTER COMPLETION OF TREATMENT**

Continue to wash with a mild soap and your hand, not a washcloth. Do not stand in the direct spray of a shower. After washing, pat treated skin dry with a soft towel and apply a thin layer of the ointment your doctor has prescribed to all treated areas very sparingly.

Avoid exposing treated skin to direct sunlight. After redness subsides, use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher on treated skin exposed to the sun.

Your skin reaction will probably increase for about seven days after your final treatment and then subside. A bra may be worn after two weeks if the skin is fully healed, but it should be worn for only part of the day. If you find any irritation after removing the bra, do not wear it without protecting the irritated skin with padding. A cotton T-shirt worn under the bra may provide greater comfort.

If you had a mastectomy before your course of radiation therapy, you should wait at least six weeks after your final radiation treatment before wearing a prosthetic bra.

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## **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 (8:00 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.