

INTRODUCTION

Your Radiation Oncologist has decided that you would benefit from a course of Radiation Therapy to the chest area, this treatment will be designed specifically for you.

This leaflet has been designed to give information and advice to help you understand the side effects that you may experience during this treatment. While your Radiation Therapy is designed to minimise side effects as much as possible, we want to warn you about potential side effects at the outset, so that you are not alarmed if/when they develop.

Radiation Therapy is a form of treatment that affects only a very specific part of the body, the area being treated. The side effects it causes will be limited to this area as well.

- Difficulty swallowing is another common side effect of Radiation Therapy to the chest. You may feel as if you have a “lump” in your throat. This is a common sensation. Your throat is not “closing,” even though it may feel that way.
- You may feel short of breath. Pace yourself, and plan activities with rest periods.
- You may notice as the treatment progresses that you start to experience soreness of the throat and neck. This is the radiation causing some inflammation. Try to eat smaller amounts of food throughout the day, avoiding spicy or rough textured food as well as foods that are too hot or cold.
- Gargling with a mixture of salt and bicarbonate of soda might help. Drink six to eight glasses of fluids a

Diet and Eating Difficulties:

- Eating may become more difficult during your treatments. Weight loss may occur, but it is important that you try to maintain your weight by following the advice below: A dietician is available to discuss any concerns about your diet.
- Maintain an adequate diet. Eat small amounts of food more often, rather than three large meals a day, to avoid feeling bloated.
- Avoid drinking alcohol. You may have an occasional glass of wine spritzer or stout, but please avoid spirits.
- Eat foods that are easy to chew and swallow, such as pudding, cheese and other dairy products, or other soft foods.
- Cut foods into small pieces or puree your food in a blender to make

Radiation Therapy to the chest is used mainly in cancers of the lung or oesophagus.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING MY TREATMENT?

Remember! Everyone is different and not everyone will experience reactions.

Cough / Breathing & Swallowing Problems:

- You may have, or develop, a cough during your course of treatment. The amount of sputum, or mucus, in your cough may increase as your radiation treatment progresses. This is normal as the radiation treatment is aggravating the lungs.

day, unless your Doctor has restricted the amount of fluids you can drink because of another medical condition.

- Do not smoke. Avoid being around people who smoke, and avoid smoke-filled rooms. Smoke can irritate your throat and lungs.
- Elevate your head and upper body when you sleep to help you to breathe more easily.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing. Do not wear a tight bra or shirt collar.

swallowing easier. Adding sauces and gravies to foods may also help.

- Food that is served chilled or at room temperature may be easier to eat than hot foods.
 - Avoid eating citrus fruits (such as oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes, and tomatoes) or foods that are spicy, salty, rough, or dry.
 - Ask your Nurse or Doctor if you need to take nutritional supplements.
-

Temporary Skin Changes:

Temporary skin changes within the treated area may occur. Usually these include redness, dryness, scaling, and itching of the treated area. Skin changes usually occur one to two weeks after your treatment begins and may last for a few weeks after your last treatment. Please follow the advice in our Information leaflet on Skin Care during Radiation Therapy.

Permanent Skin Changes:

Permanent skin changes can include increased sensitivity to hot and cold temperatures. Since the area being treated will always be more sensitive than the rest of your skin, protect the area.

Since the absorption of medication can be permanently changed in the area where you have received radiation, avoid putting medication patches on this skin.

Please use this space for questions and notes.

RADIATION THERAPY TO THE CHEST



USEFUL INFORMATION

Address: UPMC Whitfield Cancer Centre,
Cork Road, Co. Waterford



Fatigue/Tiredness:

Rest when possible. Follow the advice in our Information Leaflet on Fatigue.

Telephone: 051337444**Website:** UPMCWhitfieldCancerCentre.ie

All the side effects relevant to your Radiation Therapy will be fully discussed with you before your treatment begins.

If you have any questions or problems at any time during your treatment, bring them to the attention of anyone on your radiation therapy team – they are the best people to advise and help you.