



INSTRUCTIONS AND PRECAUTIONS DURING RADIOTHERAPY

Despite public perceptions, radiotherapy is a safe and well-tolerated means of treatment.

However, one need to be aware of some of the normal side-effects during treatment as also their prevention and treatment.

Radiotherapy of the face and neck region:

o Common side-effects:

- (1) Itchiness, redness or darkening of the skin and in case of high doses, brown crusts may form.
- (2) Loss of hair on face and scalp.
- (3) Mouth may feel dry and saliva may feel thicker than normal.
- (4) Mild to moderate difficulty in swallowing.
- (5) Mild nausea and/or vomiting.

o Precautions and instructions:

- (1) Do not rub or apply soap on the face and neck during radiotherapy
- (2) Do not shave.
- (3) Apply a mild emollient cream on the radiated areas but only after radiation-when you come for treatment, the area should be clean and dry.
- (4) Gargle regularly with an antiseptic mouth wash to keep your mouth clean and wet.
- (5) Take soft bland diet. If you have severe swallowing difficulty, your doctor may give you further medications and ask you to take liquid food only.
- (6) Drink plenty of water-at least 3-4 litres per day.
- (7) If you have nausea/ vomiting, your doctor will prescribe anti-emetics.
- (8) If you develop infections, your doctor will prescribe antibiotics and antifungals accordingly.

Radiotherapy of the thorax:

o Common side-effects:

- (1) Itchiness, redness or darkening of the skin and in case of high doses, brown crusts will form.
- (2) Mild to moderate difficulty in swallowing.
- (3) Mild to moderate nausea and/or vomiting.

o Precautions and instructions:

- (1) Do not rub or apply soap on the radiated area
- (2) Apply a mild emollient cream on the radiated areas but only after radiation-when you come for treatment, the area should be clean and dry.
- (3) Gargle regularly with an antiseptic mouth wash to keep your mouth clean and wet.
- (4) Take soft bland diet. If you have severe swallowing difficulty, your doctor may give you further medications and ask you to take liquid food only.
- (5) Drink plenty of water-at least 3-4 litres per day.
- (6) If you have nausea/ vomiting, your doctor will prescribe anti-emetics.



(7) If you develop infections, your doctor will prescribe antibiotics and antifungals accordingly.

Radiotherapy of the abdomen & pelvis:

o **Common side-effects:**

- (1) Itchiness, redness or darkening of the skin and in case of high doses, brown crusts will form.
- (2) Moderate to severe nausea and/or vomiting.
- (3) Moderate to severe diarrhoea.
- (4) Moderate to severe burning sensation & difficulty while passing urine.

o **Precautions and instructions:**

- (1) Do not rub or apply soap on the radiated area during radiotherapy
- (2) Apply a mild emollient cream on the radiated areas but only after radiation-when you come for treatment, the area should be clean and dry.
- (3) Take soft bland diet.
- (4) Drink plenty of water-at least 3-4 litres per day.
- (5) If you have nausea/ vomiting, your doctor will prescribe anti-emetics .
- (6) If you have diarrhoea, your doctor will give oral rehydration solution for mild cases while moderately severe cases may require IV fluids and anti-diarrhoeal medications.
- (7) If you have burning sensation/ difficulty passing urine, your doctor may prescribe an urinary analgesic/ antispasmodic.
- (8) If you develop infections, your doctor will prescribe antibiotics and antifungals accordingly.