

Instructions apply to the skin in the area receiving treatment only.

WASHING WHILE RECEIVING RADIATION TREATMENT:

You may wash normally with a mild soap and water. It is possible that highly perfumed soaps may irritate your skin; these should be avoided while on treatment.

You may wash your hair while undergoing radiation treatment.

You may use your usual deodorant, but discontinue use if irritation occurs.

AVOID IRRITATION TO THE SKIN BY:

- Pat your skin dry, do not rub or scrub at skin or deliberately try to remove skin markings as this may aggravate any skin reaction.
- Wear loose clothing, avoid irritation from clothing (e.g. bra straps or shirt collars)
- Avoid heat, sun and wind exposure
- Not using creams or lotions on the skin e.g. moisturisers, cosmetics, perfumes and talcs unless approved by your treatment team.
- Not shaving or waxing hair within the treatment area, this includes under your arm and in your genital area. An electric razor may be used on the face. Do not use a razor blade.

ITCHY OR SCALY SKIN:

You may notice that your skin becomes scaly and itchy. It is important to avoid scratching or rubbing your skin.

You may find that using Fatty E cream, applied thinly following treatment, keeps the affected area moisturised and is soothing.

- Fatty E cream can be obtained from your doctor, nurse or radiation therapist
- Apply the cream after bathing, up to 3-4 times daily.
- This cream should not be applied within 1 hour before treatment.
- Do **not** apply this cream to broken skin.

Other ways to reduce itch include:

- Cool compress (i.e. wring out a towel in cold water and apply it to the skin)
- Avoid extremes of temperature, e.g. hot or cold showers and hot hair dryers.
- TRY NOT TO SCRATCH

BROKEN SKIN:

Areas of broken skin may develop towards the end of your radiation treatment.

Please tell a member of the treatment team; nurse, radiation therapist or doctor

Infection is not common but it is important to keep the area clean.

Salt-water bathing may be recommended. To make a salt water solution:

- * Before starting wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water
- * Make up salt water solution: ½ teaspoon of table salt per cup of cooled boiled water.
- * Prepare the solution fresh each day.
- * Use as instructed by your oncology nurse.

We cannot make the reaction heal any faster, but covering the area with a dressing will keep it clean and be more comfortable. The Oncology nurses will assess this.

You may benefit from pain relief; talk to your nurse or doctor. A prescription can be obtained from your doctor if necessary.

PLEASE NOTE:

The skin reaction usually peaks at approximately one to two weeks after treatment has finished. It usually takes a further 2-3 weeks to return to normal.

Not every patient experiences all the above reactions to the treatment. Each person is individual, and, unfortunately, we cannot predict how your skin will react to the treatment nor can we prevent the reaction from occurring.

We can, however, help you to look after your skin and you will minimise the effects of the radiation induced skin reaction by following the above instructions.

Please contact us with any queries.

Contact Numbers

The department telephone number is (03) 364 0020.

After 5pm and at weekends your call will automatically be transferred to the Oncology Ward (Ward 26).