

## Depression & Anxiety

Cancer and its treatment can lead to depression or anxiety. Depression is when you feel sad for a long time, making it hard to live your life. Anxiety is when you often feel worry, fear or are nervous.

## Sexuality

Cancer and its treatment can change how you look and the way you feel about your body. You may be worried about how others see you. This can affect your relationships.

### Learn How to Manage Your Side Effects

Get a copy of a Symptom Management Guide in the J. Wesley Graham Resource Centre

- 'How to Manage Your Shortness of Breath'
- 'How to Manage Your Loss of Appetite'
- 'Coping with Difficulty Swallowing and Pain With Eating'
- 'Skin Care during Radiation Therapy'
- 'How to Manage your Fatigue'
- 'How to Manage Your Depression'
- 'How to Manage Your Anxiety'
- 'Cancer and Sexuality'

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# Radiation Therapy to the Chest

## Most Common Side Effects



**GRAND RIVER**  
REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE

**Waterloo Wellington  
Regional Cancer Program**  
Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario)

## What is Radiation Therapy?

Radiation therapy kills cancer cells and can stop them from going to other parts of your body. You may have side effects (changes) where your body is being treated.

Radiation side effects can:

- Start part way through your treatment
- Stop a few weeks after your treatment ends

**If you have any side effects, or need to ask a question, talk to one of your health care team members:**

- **Doctor**
- **Nurse**
- **Radiation Therapist**
- **Dietitian**

## Cough or Shortness of Breath

Radiation to the chest can cause changes to your lungs and throat.

You might have:

- A new cough
- A cough that you have may get worse
- Shortness of breath (feeling of not having enough air to breathe)
- More mucous that is a darker or lighter

## Hard Time Swallowing

Radiation may make your throat sore. If you get radiation to your lower chest it may cause heartburn or indigestion (feeling of pain or discomfort in the stomach).

**Talk to your team if you:**

- Cannot eat or drink
- Have lost weight
- Have a hard time swallowing

Fatigue (being tired) is the most common side effect people with cancer feel. This is normal. Fatigue can become worse during radiation therapy. You may feel weak or have low interest in daily tasks.

## Skin

Radiation passes through your skin. Your skin may feel:

- warm
- itchy
- look red (like a sunburn)

During your radiation therapy:

- Don't use any creams or powders unless told to by your radiation team.
- Wash the area **gently** with a mild soap.

