

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 Mouth Problems'
- 'How to Manage Your Loss of Appetite'
- 'Skin Care during Radiation Therapy'
- 'How to Manage your Fatigue'
- 'How to Manage Your Depression'
- 'How to Manage Your Anxiety'
- 'Cancer and Sexuality'

Grand River Regional Cancer Centre
519-749-4370
www.cancerwaterloowellington.ca

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Radiation Therapy to the Head & Neck

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**

Skin

Radiation passes through your skin. Your skin may feel:

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

When you start your radiation:

- Don't use any creams or powders unless told to by your Radiation team
- Wash the area gently with a mild soap
- Cover the area during very cold weather and from the sun
- If you need to shave, use an electric razor
- Don't use aftershave, cologne or perfume

Dry or Sore Mouth

Radiation will cause your mouth to make less saliva (spit). Your mouth may feel dry or sore and the taste of your food may change.

You may also get a thrush infection (creamy white, raised patches in your mouth).

Hard Time Swallowing

Your cancer or radiation treatment can make it hard or painful to swallow. This can lead to weight loss if you cannot eat your normal amounts.

Talk to your team if you notice that you:

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

Fatigue

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.

