

Learn How to Manage Your Side Effects

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

- 'Skin Care during Radiation Therapy'
- 'How to Manage your Fatigue'
- 'How to Manage Your Depression'
- 'How to Manage Your Anxiety'
- 'Cancer and Sexuality'

Radiation Therapy to the Brain

Most Common Side Effects



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

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**

Hair Loss

Radiation can cause hair loss in the area being treated. Your scalp may feel warm or itchy. Your hair will start to fall out bit by bit after your 1st week of treatment. Your hair may start growing back about 3-6 months after treatment is finished. There is a chance your hair won't grow back. Talk to your Doctor.

Headache

Radiation can cause headaches due to swelling in the brain. If you get a headache take the drugs you would normally take to help. Let a team member know.

Nausea

Radiation may cause nausea (upset stomach) from swelling in the brain. Take your nausea medication or talk with a team member if you do not know what to take.

Changes in Feeling or Movement

Swelling in the brain may also cause:

- Changes to sight, hearing or speech
- Feeling of weakness, tingling or numbness
- Unsteady walk
- Dizziness
- Seizures (blackouts)

If you get any of these changes let your team know.

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.

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.