



THE AUSTIN CENTER
FOR
RADIATION ONCOLOGY

PATIENT CARE INFORMATION FOR RADIATION THERAPY TO THE ABDOMEN/PELVIS

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS:

- **Local**
 - Nausea, and possible vomiting
 - Decrease in appetite
 - Diarrhea
 - Radiation dermatitis irritation – irritation, redness, and/or itching of the skin in the treatment area.
- **General**
 - Fatigue, loss of energy
 - Lowering of the blood counts

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

You will be receiving radiation therapy treatments from a machine called a Linear Accelerator. During treatment, the skin in the treatment field is likely to undergo some changes. Please help us to protect and care for this area by following the instructions, and alerting us of any problems or concerns you may have.

SKIN CARE (Applies only to the treatment area)

- Wash area GENTLY
- Use hands, not a wash cloth
- Use a mild cleanser, such as Dove, Basis, Aveeno
- Pat dry
- Avoid rubbing, massage, or friction
- Avoid powders, lotion and ointments
- Moisturize the skin using ONLY recommended products:

LOTIONS

- Eucerine
- Lubriderm
- Biafine (this is a prescription)
- Pure Aloe Vera Gel
- Aveeno

OINTMENTS

- Aquaphor
- Calendula

****DO NOT** apply anything to the skin at least **FOUR** hours **PRIOR** to treatment**

****ONLY apply after your treatment****

- Protect skin from the sun
- Avoid injury, trauma, scratching in the treatment area.
- The skin gradually returns to normal over 4-6 weeks following treatment.
- Shave only with an electric razor

SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT: *Please report any problems or concerns.*

Below is a quick reference. More detailed information will be provided if/when necessary.

- **Nausea**

- Take medications as prescribed.
- Dietary changes (low residue, low fat, low lactose, and low fiber).
- Eat small, more frequent meals.
- Foods should be warm, NOT very hot or cold.
 - **AVOID:** acidic foods, overly rich, sweet, greasy, or high fat foods.
- Drink fluids, such as Gatorade - diluted with water, Pedialyte, jell-o.
- Try salty fluids, such as canned soups, broth.
- Eat dry foods, such as crackers, toast.
- Rest with your head elevated for two hours after eating.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Reduce unnecessary motion, change positions slowly.
- Try relaxation techniques, anxiety may make nausea/vomiting worse.

- **Diarrhea**

- Imodium.
- Bulking agents (like psyllium fiber).
- Gas-X.
- Dietary changes (low residue, low fat, low fiber, low lactose).
 - **AVOID:** cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, highly seasoned foods, raw fruits and vegetables, whole grain cereals, whole grain breads, bran, nuts.
- Please also see Managing Diarrhea (pages 3 & 4 of this document).

MANAGING DIARRHEA

DEFINITION: Frequent passage of stools of a soft or liquid consistency, with or without discomfort.

SYMPTOMS TO REPORT:

- Abdominal cramping.
- Increased fluid content of stool.
- Increase in the number of bowel movements.

WHAT THE DOCTOR MAY DO:

- Suggest Imodium (Loperamide)
This medication is over the counter. It will help to slow the bowels down and allow more fluid to be absorbed.
****YOU SHOULD NOT take more than 8 pills a day (16mg) total unless instructed by your doctor.**
- Prescribed Lomotil
This is a prescription medication. It will help to slow the bowels down and decrease spasms (cramping).
****YOU SHOULD NOT take more than 8 pills in 24 hours unless instructed by your doctor.**
- Suggest alternating Lomotil with Imodium. These two medications work differently in the body but also work together well to help decrease diarrhea.
****If alternating these two medications, YOU SHOULD NOT take more than 8 pills total per day in any combination unless instructed by your doctor.**

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

- Take medications as directed by the Doctor. If they are not effective, let the Doctor know so adjustments in the dose, frequency or type of medication can be made.
- Follow the low residue diet instructions. If this is not effective, you may need a more restrictive diet and/or a dietary consult.
- Continue to follow the diet throughout treatments and beyond until bowel patterns return to normal.
- Increase fluids intake (up to 3 liters per day) to prevent dehydration.
- Avoid whole milk and dairy products. If diarrhea persists, you may need to limit dairy products completely.
- Eat foods rich in potassium (banana's are very helpful when blended to make a drink.)
- Perform skin care to the perineal area as directed.
- Warm water sitz baths (if allowed by the Doctor.)
- Lactobacillus acidophilus – helps restore “friendly bacteria” to the bowel. It can be found in yogurt with active cultures.

LOW RESIDUE DIET FOR CONTROL OF RADIATION INDUCED SIDE EFFECTS

FOODS ALLOWED

FOODS TO AVOID

BEVERAGES/DAIRY

Skim or low-fat milk, tea, soda, Gatorade – diluted with water or Pedialyte, ice milk, sherbet, low-fat yogurt (plain, vanilla or lemon), buttermilk.

Coffee, beer, liquor, fruit juice (except apple juice), chocolate milk, coca, hot chocolate.

BREADS AND CEREALS

White bread and rolls, plain muffins, saltines, pretzels, melba toast, cream of wheat or rice, farina, corn and rice cereal, well-cooked oatmeal.

Dark whole-grain breads, rolls and cereals (e.g. whole wheat, cracked wheat, bran, pumpernickel, rye, granola, wheat germ, shredded wheat, bran flakes, cereals with dried fruit and nuts)

STARCHY FOODS

White potatoes (no skin), plain spaghetti, macaroni, noodles, other pasta (not tomato sauce), white rice.

Sweet potatoes, potato skins, brown or wild rice, pizza.

VEGETABLES

Well-cooked carrots, squash, green beans.

All other vegetables (cooked or raw), especially cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, baked beans, kidney beans, peas, radishes, cucumbers, corn.

FRUITS

Bananas, apples in any form (baked, raw, applesauce, apple juice).

All other fruits and juices.

MEATS AND MEAT SUBSTITUTES

Chicken (stewed, creamed, broiled or baked, all without skin), turkey, lean beef, veal, pork, lamb, ham, fish, canned or well washed claims, eggs, cottage cheese, hard cheese.

All fried, tough or spicy meats, hot dogs, sausage, poultry skins, gritty seafood, pork and beans, peanut butter.

MISCELLANEOUS

Broth, bouillon, consommé, creamed soups, salt, sugar, jelly, honey, plain Jell-O, custard, tapioca pudding, other puddings (except chocolate, hard candies).

All seasonings, jams, pickles, popcorn, olives, coconut, nuts, dried seeds, chocolate cake and chocolate cookies.