



## Breast Radiation Guidelines

New and improved machines make it possible to provide more precise radiation treatments. Your breast radiation may be to:

- only a part of the breast (*partial breast*)
- the entire breast (*tangents*)
- the entire breast including the axillary (armpit) and supraclavicular (above the collar bone in the neck area) lymph nodes (*4-field approach*).

Your radiation may be given while lying on your belly or lying on your back. Your doctor will choose the treatment position that will cause the fewest side effects as possible. To lessen any side effects that you do experience, we are providing the following guidelines:

### Skin Care

#### **DON'T:**

- wash off any pen marks on your skin until your tattoos are placed for your treatment. Your doctor will tell you when it is all right to wash off the pen marks.
- use soap on the breast skin when washing for as long as you are receiving treatment.
- use talcum powder, cornstarch, creams, and lotions on the skin receiving radiation.
- use deodorant if you are receiving the 4-field approach. (If you are not receiving the 4-field approach, a little solid roll deodorant is alright to use.)
- use icepacks or heating pads on the treatment area. (You may use a cool compress to relieve any itching and take Tylenol for breast tenderness.)
- wear clothing that is too tight or irritating to the skin, such as wool.
- wear a bra that has an underwire or is so tight it will leave a dent in your skin.



**DO:**

- use **Biafine emulsion** twice a day to the treated breast skin, starting on the first day of treatment. Your doctor or nurse practitioner will prescribe this for you. It is best to apply the Biafine emulsion **after** radiation treatment, not before. If your breast becomes irritated, please let the nurse practitioner know right away.
- protect the treatment area from the sun. Your skin will be more sensitive to the sun during radiation and for many months after. Talk to your nurse about what you can do if you plan to spend time in the sun.

**Other things to consider**

**DON'T:**

- take vitamins during radiation treatment. Please ask your nurse or doctor about taking vitamins.
- take any new medications that may be prescribed during your treatments without first talking to your nurse or doctor. Some medications can cause a more severe radiation reaction.

**DO:**

- rest or take a short nap if you feel tired at the end of the day, because fatigue is one side effect you may have.
- eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of water and other liquids to help lessen fatigue.
- keep your weekend schedule light so you can restore your energy.

Your treatment will be given by a certified radiation therapist who will give you your treatment as ordered by your doctor. You will have an X-ray taken at least once a week during your treatment. Your doctor uses these X-rays to check on your treatment fields.

Your doctor or nurse practitioner will see you at least once a week. Please talk to them about any concerns or questions you may have.