Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Bowel Prep Quick Guide: IMRT to Your Prostate or Radiation Therapy After Prostate Surgery

This is a quick guide for bowel prep before and during your radiation therapy. It's meant for people who are getting one of these types of radiation therapy:

- Intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) to your prostate
- Radiation therapy after prostate surgery (post-prostatectomy radiation therapy)

Read *About Intensity-Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) to Your Prostate* (www.mskcc.org/pe/imrt-prostate) or *About Radiation Therapy After Prostate Surgery* (www.mskcc.org/pe/rt-after-prostate-surgery) for full instructions.

3 days before your simulation

Date: _____

- Start taking 2 (125 mg) simethicone (Gas-X ®) tablets after breakfast and after dinner. Take them every day.
- Start taking 1 (5 mg) bisacodyl (Dulcolax ®) tablet at night. Take it every night.

It's OK to stop taking the simethicone and bisacodyl tablets after your simulation while your care team plans your treatments.

3 days before your first radiation treatment

Date: _____

- Restart taking 2 (125 mg) simethicone (Gas-X) tablets after breakfast and after dinner every day.
- Restart taking 1 (5 mg) bisacodyl (Dulcolax) tablet every night.

Keep taking simethicone (Gas-X) and bisacodyl (Dulcolax) every day until you finish radiation therapy. If your care team gives you other instructions, follow those instead.

During your radiation therapy

Try to poop within 1 hour before your radiation treatment appointments.

Tell your care team if you start to have diarrhea. We can help you adjust your bisacodyl dose.

Tell your care team if you're following these instructions but still can't poop before each treatment. We can adjust your bowel prep to find something that works better for you.

Helpful reminders

To reduce gas and bloating:

- Eat slowly, chew your food well, and avoid using drinking straws or drinking from bottles and cans. This will help you avoid swallowing air.
- Avoid carbonated drinks, such as seltzer, soda, and beer.
- Limit foods and drinks that produce gas when they're digested. Examples include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, onions, garlic, dried fruits, and milk and dairy if you're lactose intolerant. Read the section "Diet guidelines to limit bloating" in *About Intensity-Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) to Your Prostate* (www.mskcc.org/pe/imrt-prostate) or *About Radiation Therapy After Prostate Surgery* (www.mskcc.org/pe/rt-after-prostate-surgery) for the full list.

- Choose cooked vegetables instead of raw vegetables.

To help fill your bladder:

- It's important to stay well hydrated. Most people need to have a comfortably full bladder for their simulation and radiation treatments.
- We suggest you drink about 64 ounces (8 cups) of water each day leading up to your appointments, unless another healthcare provider has told you to limit the amount you drink.
- Your radiation therapist will give you more instructions during your simulation appointment.

Contact information

If you have questions or concerns, contact a member of your radiation therapy team. You can reach them at the numbers below.

Radiation oncologist: _____
Phone number: _____

Radiation nurse: _____
Phone number: _____

A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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