



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Side Effects of Palliative Radiation Therapy to the Spine

Memorial Sloan Kettering nurse practitioner Carol Ann Milazzo describes side effects commonly associated with radiation therapy to the spine. Radiation can cause patients to feel temporarily fatigued. Because radiation travels through the skin, it may cause the treated area to look and feel sunburned – a condition called radiation dermatitis.

Other common side effects of palliative radiation therapy to the spine may include temporary worsening of back pain, sore throat, heartburn, and nausea, depending on the level of the spine being treated. Patients may want to ask their doctors about how to manage these potential side effects during and immediately after radiation.



Please visit www.mskcc.org/videos/side-effects-palliative-radiation-therapy-spine to watch this video.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

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

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