

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Side Effects of Palliative Radiation Therapy to the Spine

MSK nurse practitioner Carol Ann Milazzo describes side effects commonly associated with radiation therapy to the spine.

Radiation can make you temporarily fatigued. Because radiation travels through your skin, it can make the treated area look and feel sunburned. This condition is 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.

You may want to ask your doctors about how to manage these potential side effects during and right after radiation.

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

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. 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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