Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Side Effects of Palliative Radiation Therapy to the Abdomen or Pelvis

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

Radiation can make you feel 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 may include nausea, heartburn, diarrhea, and a sensation of burning hemorrhoids.

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-abdomen-pelvis to watch this video.

This video was published in September 2013. It was last reviewed for accuracy in October 2026.

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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