



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 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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