CARING FOR YOURSELF DURING TREATMENT

- Get plenty of rest during treatment. For most patients, it is acceptable to be active during treatment, including routine exercise.
- Follow your doctor’s orders. Ask your doctor, nurse or other member of your treatment team if you are unsure about anything or if you have questions about your treatments and side effects.
- Tell your doctor about any medications, vitamins or supplements you are taking to make sure they are safe to use during radiation therapy.
- Eat a balanced diet. If food tastes funny or you’re having trouble eating, tell your doctor or dietician. They will work with you to help you make changes in your diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Keep very well hydrated by drinking eight, 8 oz. glasses of fluid daily. Jell-O, broth and sherbet, are all considered to be part of your fluid intake.
- Treat the skin exposed to radiation with special care. Stay out of the sun, avoid hot or cold packs, and only use lotions and ointments after checking with your doctor or nurse. When cleaning the area, use only water and a mild soap.

Battling cancer is tough. Don’t be afraid to ask friends, family, support groups and your radiation oncology treatment team for help.

HELPFUL WEBSITES ON SKIN CANCER
Melanoma Research Foundation
www.melanoma.org
Skin Cancer Foundation
www.skincancer.org
Radiation Therapy Answers
www.rtanswers.org

LEARNING ABOUT CLINICAL TRIALS
The radiation oncology treatment team is constantly exploring new ways to treat cancer through studies called clinical trials. Today’s standard radiation therapy treatments are the result of clinical trials completed years ago. For more information on clinical trials, ask your doctor or visit:

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials
Radiation Therapy Oncology Group
www.rtog.org
Clinical Trials.gov
www.clinicaltrials.gov

ABOUT THE RADIATION ONCOLOGY TEAM
Radiation oncologists are the doctors who oversee the care of each person undergoing radiation treatment. Other members of the treatment team include radiation therapists, radiation oncology nurses, medical physicists, dosimetrists, social workers and nutritionists. For information on what each of these professionals does or to locate a radiation oncologist near you, visit www.rtanswers.org.

ABOUT ASTRO
The American Society for Radiation Oncology is the largest radiation oncology society in the world with 10,000 members who specialize in treating cancer with radiation therapies. ASTRO is dedicated to improving patient care through education, clinical practice, advancement of science and advocacy. Visit www.astro.org for more information.

Side effects of Skin Cancer Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organ System</th>
<th>Acute Complications (Days-Months After Treatment)</th>
<th>Late Complications (Months-Years After Treatment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Body</td>
<td>• Tiredness (temporary fatigue, common)</td>
<td>• None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin</td>
<td>• Itching (pruritis)</td>
<td>• Darkening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Darkening</td>
<td>• Redness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Redness</td>
<td>• Dryness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hair loss (inside radiation treatment area only)</td>
<td>• Hair loss (inside radiation treatment area only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pain</td>
<td>• Dry peeling (dry desquamation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dry peeling (dry desquamation)</td>
<td>• Wet peeling (moist desquamation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mucosal irritation</td>
<td>• Mucosal irritation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Firmness</td>
<td>• Firmness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Small blood vessel formation at surface of skin (telangiectasia)</td>
<td>• Small blood vessel formation at surface of skin (telangiectasia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Darkening or lightening of skin</td>
<td>• Darkening or lightening of skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lymph System</td>
<td>• Swelling of nearby body parts (leg or arm edema if lymph nodes were treated)</td>
<td>• Uncommon for skin cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation</td>
<td>• New (radiation-induced) skin cancers inside or near the treatment field or new cancers of the underlying muscle/bone (rare)</td>
<td>• Soft tissue necrosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Soft tissue necrosis</td>
<td>• Cartilage damage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TYPES OF SKIN CANCER

**Basal cell carcinoma**
- The most common form of skin cancer, and very curable. This cancer begins in the outer layer of skin (epidermis).
- Basal cell carcinoma rarely spreads to other parts of the body. Radiation therapy is very effective for treating basal cell cancers that have not spread elsewhere. Other common treatments include surgery, chemotherapy, and cryosurgery.

**Squamous cell carcinoma**
- The second most common type of skin cancer. This cancer also begins in the epidermis. Radiation therapy can be used to treat squamous cell cancers that start on the skin and sometimes nearby lymph nodes with or without surgery.
- Common treatments include surgery, chemotherapy, and cryosurgery.

**Melanoma**
- The most serious skin cancer; it begins in skin cells called melanocytes that produce skin color (melanin).
- Melanoma is usually treated first with surgery and may be followed by radiation therapy to treat cancer and other diseases.
- Brachytherapy: A special form of radiation that places the radiation source very close to the tumor. This form of radiation tends to be shorter in duration than regular radiation therapy.
- Surgery: The cancer cells are cut out and removed.
- Mohs surgery: A form of surgery where the tumor is removed one layer at a time. This technique may allow a dermatologist to preserve more healthy tissue.
- Laser surgery: The cancer cells are attacked by a drug that is either taken by mouth or injected into a vein to help.
- Photodynamic therapy: The cancer is treated with a drug that is very sensitive to a special kind of light. When exposed to that special light, the drug produces a chemical reaction that kills nearby cells.
- Chemotherapy: The cancer cells are attacked by a drug that is either taken by mouth or injected into a vein to help.
- Biologic therapy: Medication given to help your immune system fight the cancer better.

**Understanding Radiation Therapy**
- Radiation therapy, also called radiotherapy, is the careful use of radiation to treat many different kinds of cancer including skin cancers.
- Radiation oncologists use radiation therapy to try to cure cancer, to control cancer growth or to relieve symptoms such as pain.
- Radiation therapy works within cancer cells by damaging their ability to multiply. When these cells die, the body naturally eliminates them. Healthy cells that grow and divide quickly are also harmed by radiation, but they are able to repair themselves in a way that cancer cells cannot.
- Mediastinal radiation: Radiation is given outside your body. Radiation beams are targeted at your tumor, giving more radiation to the skin cancer while keeping it away from sensitive parts of the body underneath the skin cancer.

**External Beam Radiation Therapy**
- External beam radiation therapy may be used to treat skin cancer itself or to relieve pain from cancer that has spread.
- Radiation oncologists (physicians who specialize in treating cancer with radiation) deliver external beam radiation therapy to the cancer from a machine outside your body. Radiation beams are targeted at your tumor, giving more radiation to the skin cancer while keeping it away from sensitive parts of the body underneath the skin cancer.

**Potential Side Effects**
- The cancer cells are attacked by a drug that is either taken by mouth or injected into a vein to help.
- Photodynamic therapy: The cancer is treated with a drug that is very sensitive to a special kind of light. When exposed to that special light, the drug produces a chemical reaction that kills nearby cells.
- Chemotherapy: The cancer cells are attacked by a drug that is either taken by mouth or injected into a vein to help.
- Biologic therapy: Medication given to help your immune system fight the cancer better.

**Brachytherapy**
- Brachytherapy is a form of radiation where the radiation source is placed very close to the skin cancer. This form of radiation can be applied to the tumor using metal applicators, a series of tubes, or a flap of beads that conforms to the skin (free屠落, flaps). When high-dose-rate (HDR) treatments are given, treatments are usually scheduled two days per week instead of each day. Long-term studies following patients who have received brachytherapy show that this form of radiation is very effective in treating skin cancer and the vast majority continue to remain cancer-free many years after treatment. In general, the cosmetic outcome with HDR brachytherapy is excellent and recovery time is minimal.

**Treatments can be used on their own (radiation alone or surgery alone) or they can be combined.**
- Radiation can be combined with chemotherapy and cryotherapy.
- Brachytherapy: A method of delivering a very high dose of radiation to a tumor using a radioactive source close to the skin with a treatment called brachytherapy.

**External Beam Radiation Therapy**
- External beam radiation therapy may be used to treat skin cancer itself or to relieve pain from cancer that has spread.
- Radiation oncologists (physicians who specialize in treating cancer with radiation) deliver external beam radiation therapy to the cancer from a machine outside your body. Radiation beams are targeted at your tumor, giving more radiation to the skin cancer while keeping it away from sensitive parts of the body underneath the skin cancer.

### TREATING SKIN CANCER

**Basal cell carcinoma**
- The treatment you receive depends on several factors, including your overall health, the stage of the disease and whether the cancer has spread to other parts of your body. Doctors may choose to treat the cancer with surgery and may be followed by radiation therapy to treat cancer and other diseases.

**Squamous cell carcinoma**
- Radiation therapy includes surgery, chemotherapy and cryosurgery.

**Melanoma**
- Melanoma is usually treated first with surgery and may be followed by radiation therapy to treat cancer and other diseases.

**Types of Treatment**
- The treatment you receive depends on several factors, including your overall health, the stage of the disease and whether the cancer has spread to other parts of your body. Doctors may choose to treat the cancer with surgery and may be followed by radiation therapy to treat cancer and other diseases.

**Side Effects**
- Side effects you might feel will depend on the part of your body being treated, the dose of radiation given and whether you also receive other treatments like chemotherapy.

**Potential Side Effects**
- The cancer cells are attacked by a drug that is either taken by mouth or injected into a vein to help.
- Photodynamic therapy: The cancer is treated with a drug that is very sensitive to a special kind of light. When exposed to that special light, the drug produces a chemical reaction that kills nearby cells.
- Chemotherapy: The cancer cells are attacked by a drug that is either taken by mouth or injected into a vein to help.
- Biologic therapy: Medication given to help your immune system fight the cancer better.