

Radiation therapy: Preparing for treatment

LIVING BEYOND
BREAST CANCER®

Try these tips from our breast cancer community and trusted experts to make your radiation treatment and recovery more comfortable.

GET READY MENTALLY

- Practice some simple relaxation techniques for radiation therapy if your treatment requires holding your breath. Box-breathing, which asks you to inhale, hold your breath, exhale, and hold your exhale for four seconds each, is a simple place to start.
- Take care of your mental health. Many people find benefits from staying active, staying off of the internet, and therapy with a licensed professional. Try to schedule time to do your favorite activities that make you happy and relaxed. Having emotional and mental support can help you believe in your body's ability to heal.
- Try visualizations during breathing exercises to ease anxiety. You can replay favorite memories or imagine a wave of healing energy washing over you.

SPEAK UP FOR YOUR NEEDS

- Don't be afraid to ask questions of your providers – it's your body and healing journey. It goes very quickly once you are diagnosed, and it can be very overwhelming.

SMART IDEA

- Designate an old T-shirt for wearing over your ointment so that it doesn't ruin your clothes. Bamboo and cotton bra liners can also add a layer of comfort for sensitive breast skin.

MANAGE SIDE EFFECTS

- Protect your skin by applying an ointment such as Aquaphor several times a day. You can layer a moisturizer, such as coconut oil or calendula cream, under the ointment. Be sure to wash off any moisturizers prior to your radiation appointment – you must have clean dry skin for treatment. Your provider may have specific skin care instructions to follow.
- Rest. Radiation fatigue builds up over time, and people often start to feel the effects a week or two into treatment. Give yourself recovery time after each treatment, and accept help from loved ones so you can conserve your energy.

