



**Waterloo Wellington  
Regional Cancer Program**  
in partnership with Cancer Care Ontario



**Grand River Regional Cancer Centre**  
835 King St. W, Kitchener, ON  
519-749-4380  
[www.grhosp.on.ca/cancerprogram](http://www.grhosp.on.ca/cancerprogram)

# **Skin Care During Radiation Therapy**

## What is Radiation?

Radiation therapy kills cancer cells and can stop them from going to other areas in your body. You may have side effects (changes) where your body is being treated with radiation.

Radiation side effects can:

- Start part way through your treatment
- Stop a few weeks after your treatment ends

**If you have any side effects, or need to ask a question, talk to one of your health care team members:**

- **Doctor**
- **Nurse**
- **Radiation Therapist**

## Skin

Radiation passes through your skin. This may cause changes to your skin in the treated area. Your skin may feel:

- warm
- itchy
- look red (like a sunburn)
- might peel

## Caring for Your Skin

- Wash using warm water and mild soap
- Pat dry with a soft towel
- Do not rub, scrub, or scratch
- Do not use any creams or powders unless told to by your radiation team
- Wear loose clothing
- You can use deodorant until your underarm gets red or sore
- Cover the area from the sun, cold and wind
- Use an electric razor to shave in treated area

## Caring for Your Skin After Treatment

When your treatment is finished, the changes to your skin may get worse before they get better. This is normal. These changes will peak in 7-10 days. Follow this skin care guide until your skin feels better.

From now on the skin in the treated area will always sunburn more quickly than the rest of your body. Protect it from the sun by keeping it covered or using a sunscreen SPF 30 (UVA/UVB) or higher. You can begin to use sunscreen once your skin has healed.