

## Tips

To apply a cold wrap: wet a clean cotton cloth made of fine material (e.g. a handkerchief or nappy) with cold tap water and apply to the irradiated skin for a short time (1 minute). Repeat this process three to four times and then let the skin dry in the air. Do this several times a day. If recommended by the treatment team, apply calendula ointment after the radiotherapy.

## Further information on this topic

- **«Radiation Therapy and You»** (National Cancer Institute, 2021) – Guide to understand radiation therapy, its side effects, and how to manage them
- **«Feel more like you»** (MacMillan Cancer Support, 2025) – Guide on changes to skin, nails and hair because of cancer treatment

## Irradiated skin

### Good to know

In radiotherapy, rays are specifically targeted at the tumour region.

The irradiated skin may redden, as with sunburn. Slight overheating or swelling may also be noticeable. Dry skin, skin flaking and itching are usually later symptoms. Depending on the site of irradiation, the mucous membranes may also be affected (e.g. in the mouth, throat or anal region).



Make sure you systematically follow the radio-oncologist's skin care recommendations. No cream should usually be applied to the irradiated skin for one hour before and after the radiotherapy.

It is important to take good care of the irradiated skin region during and for up to about 3 weeks after the radiotherapy. After the end of the radiotherapy, too, the irradiated skin region should be consistently protected from the sun, for example with clothing, a hat or a scarf.

Tell the treatment team about any pre-existing hypersensitivities of your skin.



## Irradiated skin

You feel...	Or you notice...	What you can do for yourself...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mild consequences of the radiotherapy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes made of natural materials like cotton or silk (depending on the skin region that has been irradiated).</li> <li>Shower with mild products and use only lukewarm water on the irradiated area. Pat the skin dry with a soft towel, without rubbing. Pay particular attention to the skin in the skin folds.</li> <li>Nourish the skin with moisturising skin creams, if possible containing urea.</li> <li>Do not use any perfumes (containing alcohol) on the irradiated skin. Apply deodorant only to intact skin.</li> <li>Use an electric razor for shaving to reduce the risk of injury.</li> <li>Avoid direct exposure of the irradiated area of skin to sunlight and harsh winds and cover it with clothing.</li> <li>Apply sunscreen (at least factor 30) to intact skin only if you cannot protect your skin with clothing.</li> <li>Do not use hot water bottles, heating pads, ice packs or so-called hot packs or cold packs on the irradiated skin region</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reddened, overheated skin</li> <li>Swelling</li> <li>Dry skin and skin flaking</li> <li>Itching</li> <li>Fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the case of itching or reddened and overheated skin, apply cold water wraps. See "Tips".</li> <li>Do not use plasters on the irradiated skin.</li> <li>Keep the treatment team informed of changes to your skin.</li> <li>In the case of any further changes and if you feel unwell, inform the treatment team of these symptoms so that you can receive individual advice.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rapid worsening of the symptoms listed in the yellow section</li> <li>Inflamed mucous membranes</li> <li>Blistering</li> <li>Weeping and/or painful areas of skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the treatment team.</li> </ul>