

# SIDE EFFECTS OF PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT

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**Intermountain®**  
Cancer Centers

# SIDE EFFECTS OF PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT

Radiation therapy for prostate cancer can cause side effects. A side effect is a negative or unwanted reaction to treatment. Most side effects come on slowly, usually starting about 3 weeks into treatment, and last for a few weeks after radiation therapy ends.

## COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- **Diarrhea.** Loose, watery stools.
- **Fatigue.** Extreme tiredness.
- **Urinary changes.** Problems with urination (peeing). Ask your care team for the *Managing Urinary Changes* handout.
- **Proctitis.** Inflammation of the rectum that can cause blood in the stool (poop). It is usually mild and is often related to pre-existing hemorrhoids. A sitz bath may help relieve this side effect. Ask your care team for the *Sitz Bath* handout.
- **Erectile dysfunction.** You may notice this right away due to hormonal treatment or it may appear several months later. It depends on your age, medical condition, the medication you currently take, and your level of sexual function before treatment began.
- **Decrease in semen.** The amount of semen you produce will decrease or disappear. The prostate provides some of the fluid in the semen. If you are interested in using a sperm bank, please talk with your healthcare provider before starting radiation.

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