

Side Effects of Bone Metastasis Treatment

Radiation therapy for bone metastasis can cause side effects. A side effect is a negative or unwanted reaction to treatment. Most side effects come on slowly, usually starting about 1 to 2 weeks into treatment, and last for a few weeks after radiation therapy ends.

Common Side Effects

- **Skin irritation.** Your skin may develop an irritation similar to a sunburn. This is typically visible after about 2 weeks of treatment. Your provider will recommend creams and ointments that may help with the irritation.
- **Fatigue.** You may become extremely tired, especially in the later weeks of radiation therapy. Fatigue can be managed with a balance of rest and exercise. Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night and 20 to 30 minutes of exercise as tolerated.
- **Changes in pain control.** Each person's body will respond differently to radiation treatment. Pain may diminish within a few days, later into your treatments, or after treatment ends. Pain medication and regimens may help manage pain. The goal is to achieve pain relief without negative side effects. Please let your physician, nurse, or therapist know if your pain is not controlled.

Bone Fracture Precautions

If cancer has spread to your weight-bearing bones (spine, hips, legs, or arms), you may need to reduce stress on these bones to lower your risk of fracture. While it is important to stay as active as possible, you must balance exercise and rest.

Avoid stress on affected fragile bones

- Ask for help with large household tasks. Take breaks when doing smaller tasks yourself.
- Reduce stress on your bones by avoiding holding or carrying heavy items for too long.
- Use your largest unaffected (healthy) bones for tasks, such as opening heavy doors.

Maintain good posture and practice good home safety

- Remove throw rugs from your floors.
- Use anti-slip tape or a mat in the bathtub and shower, or use a shower chair.
- Wear shoes that support your feet.
- Use extreme caution on walkways that are wet or on uneven ground.

General signs of a fracture

A fracture could happen without injury due to weakened bones. Watch for these signs:

- Increased pain in the area.
- Grating or crunching sounds with exercise or movement.
- The area over a painful bone is reddened and feels warm.



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