

## Radiation Therapy and Side Effects

Radiation therapy uses X-rays to kill cancer cells. Radiation therapy is given after a lumpectomy (surgery) and sometimes after mastectomy. Radiation therapy may be given in different ways.

You may be unsure of what to ask your doctor regarding radiation. Here are some questions to help start the conversation.

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**Q:** Why do I need radiation therapy?

**A:**

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**Q:** How many radiation treatments will I have? When should I start? Will I need someone to go with me?

**A:**

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**Q:** How long will each radiation treatment take? Who will give me the radiation treatments?

**A:**

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**Q:** How is radiation given?

**A:**

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**Q:** If I choose to have my breast reconstructed, do I still need radiation? If so, can it be done before or after radiation?

**A:**

**Q:** What can I do to prepare for my treatment (i.e., wear a two-piece outfit)?

**A:**

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**Q:** What are the possible side effects of radiation? How long will they last? What side effects should I report to you?

**A:**

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**Q:** What are the long-term risks of this treatment?

**A:**

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**Q:** Can I continue normal activities (work, sex, sports, etc.) during treatment? After treatment?

**A:**

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**Q:** How often should I return to see you after my radiation treatments end? Which doctor should I see?

**A:**

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**Q:** What can I do to prepare my skin for radiation? How can I best treat my skin in between radiation therapy?

**A:**



For more information on breast health or breast cancer, please call our breast care helpline (1-877-465-6636) or visit our website. Susan G. Komen does not provide medical advice.

**[www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org) 1-877 GO KOMEN**