Chem Center for Radiation Oncology

End of Treatment Instructions

The side effects associated with your treatment should begin to resolve in the weeks following completion of your therapy.

- <u>Swallowing difficulty</u>: The difficulty swallowing you may have experienced during your treatment should be improved a week after finishing treatment, if it is not please notify your CHEM physician.
- <u>Fatigue</u>: Fatigue may continue for several weeks following completion of your therapy. Some patients may take longer to recover and regain their pretreatment energy level. Schedule your activities according to the way you feel. Rest if you are tired.
- Skin Care: Continue to be gentle with your skin in the weeks following completion of your treatments. The skin on your chest and upper back will be reddened, dry and itchy. Apply moisturizers to area as often as necessary to relive your discomfort. Always feel free to consult your CHEM physician or nurse if irritation is not improving.
- <u>Diet</u>: Good nutrition helps speed the healing process. Small, frequent, high calorie meals are recommended if our appetite has decreased as a result of your treatments. Nutritional supplements are available if needed. Ask your physician or nurse for information.

Report to your physician the following symptoms:

Increased difficulty breathing
A cough accompanied by fever or chills
Blood in sputum
Loss of appetite

• Follow up appointments

Routine follow-up appointments with your radiation oncologist will be scheduled. Your first appointment will be approximately one month after the completion of your treatments. If you have not scheduled this appointment, please do so.

• Now is the time to notify other physicians involved in your care of the completion of your radiation treatments.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your recovery, do not hesitate to call the CHEM Center at (781) 279-0655.

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Management of Common Side Effects

The side effects of your radiation therapy have been explained to you by your radiation oncologist. Listed below are the more common side effects that you may experience during your treatment.

Remember most side effects are temporary and will resolve after the completion of your therapy.

<u>Esophagitis</u> is an inflammation of the lining of the esophagus. Because of its location it often becomes irritated by radiation treatments to this area. Most patients will report increased difficulty swallowing solid foods after approximately <u>2 weeks</u> of treatment. (Other patients report feeling a lump in their throat when swallowing). This sensation may last up to a week, and then get better on its own. If you should experience this side effect we suggest that you soften your diet.

Liquid antacid taken before meals may relieve the difficulty swallowing or heartburn resulting from your treatment.

You will want to avoid smoking, alcohol, and spicy or dry, course foods.

Notify your physician or nurse if these suggestions are not helpful in relieving your discomfort.

- <u>Fatigue</u> is a common side effect of radiation therapy. Expect increasing fatigue as your treatments progress. Plan your activities according to the way you feel. Rest if you are tired.
- Skin irritation of the chest and back. Skin may become reddened, dry and itchy. Apply only moisturizers recommended by your doctor or nurse. Do not apply moisturizers to your skin for 4 hours before your treatment
- Additional side effects. You may develop a cough during your treatments.
 This is not unusual. Report to your physician if your cough is keeping you awake at night.
- Report to your physician the following symptoms:

A cough accompanied by fever or chills.
Change in color of your sputum or blood in sputum
Shortness of breath
Loss of appetite