

## WHOLE BRAIN/SCALP

### CHEM Center for Radiation Oncology Radiation Therapy to Whole Brain/Scalp

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

- **Hair Loss** Hair loss is an unavoidable side effect of your treatment. Most hair loss occurs after approximately two weeks of treatment. You may want to select a wig or hairpiece before hair loss occurs. Some patients prefer turbans, scarves or caps. Regrowth of hair will occur two to four months after your treatments have been completed.
  
- **Skin Irritation** Your scalp will become reddened, dry and itchy as your treatments progress.

#### Care of Scalp

- You may wash hair gently with a mild shampoo.
- Comb gently, being careful not to scratch scalp.
- Avoid hot curlers, curling irons and hairspray.
- Do not apply any moisturizers to scalp without first checking with your doctor or nurse. A few drops of baby oil mixed in a quart of warm water will help soothe and moisturize scalp.
  
- After the completion of your treatments moisturizers may be applied to scalp to relieve the dryness and itching resulting from your treatments.
  
- Special attention should be given to the folds of skin behind the ears. The skin in this area can be extra sensitive particularly in those individuals who wear glasses. Report tenderness or moist, open areas to your physician or nurse.

Continue to be gentle with your scalp in the weeks following completion of your treatments. The **peak skin reaction** is most likely to occur the week **after** your treatments have finished. During this time use only moisturizers recommended by your doctor or nurse.

- **Fatigue** You may experience increasing fatigue as your treatments progress. Schedule your activities according to the way you feel. Rest if you are tired. Fatigue may persist for several weeks following completion of your therapy.
- **Decreased Hearing** Decreased hearing may occur after your treatments have been completed. This condition is only temporary and will resolve within a few weeks.
- **Medications**
  - **Antiseizure medication:** continue to take antiseizure medication as prescribed by your physician.
  - **Steroid medication:** (Decadron, Dexone, Dexamthasone)  
Many patients are prescribed steroid medication prior to beginning treatments. It is important to take medications as directed. Taking with food helps decrease the possible stomach irritation common with steroid medication. **Do not** discontinue without first consulting with your physician.
- **Symptoms to report:**
  - Headaches
  - Nausea/vomiting
  - Difficulty walking
  - Changes in vision
  - Weakness in arms or legs
- **Driving:** Although we understand the inconvenience, we strongly advise for your safety and the safety of others that you **not drive** at this time. Your physician will discuss this with you.

### **Follow-up Appointments**

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

Now is also the time to notify other physicians involved in your care of the completion of your therapy.

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