Skin Care and Cancer Treatment
Patient Education

You may have some skin changes during and after your chemotherapy treatments. It is important to follow these suggestions:

Skin changes can increase your risk for infection. It is important to follow good hygiene such as bathing, hand washing before and after eating and after using the restroom. After each bowel movement, cleanse your rectal area gently. You may use a mild soap or cleansing lotion.

Check your skin daily for any changes such as any cuts, sores, patches, drainage or bruising. Consult your doctor or nurse if you notice any swelling, redness, warmth or pain anywhere on your skin. If you are receiving radiation treatments (especially with chemotherapy at the same time) your skin may begin to look dry, red, irritated (peeling) or tanned. This is a normal skin reaction to your treatments. Your radiation doctor and nurse will give you instructions for treating the skin.

The following tips can help you to prevent or lessen the skin problems:

- You may apply pure aloe vera gel and/or moisturizing lotion to the skin. A non-scented, mild lotion is usually recommended (avoid oil-based lotions). Do not put on any lotion or aloe vera gel 1 to 2 hours prior to your radiation treatment. You may apply these products after the treatment is completed.
- Keep your lips moist by using a lip moisturizer.
- Protect hands by wearing gloves when working in the garden and wear rubber gloves when doing dishes. Keep nails short, especially if your skin feels itchy. Be careful when cutting nails – being sure not to cut skin and maintain good care of cuticles.
- Avoid adhesive tapes on the skin. Use only an electric razor and do not shave the area treated by radiation.
- Limit sun exposure to the skin. Use sunscreen with an SPF>30.
- Check to see if your clothing rubs on your skin. You want to make sure your clothing does not irritate your skin. Loose cotton clothing is recommended.
- To help maintain healthy skin:
  - Eat a well balanced diet

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