



# RADIOTHERAPY IN THE AREA OF THE BREAST

## ADVICE FOR YOUR TREATMENT

- Hygiene
  - You are advised to wash in plain water, avoiding very hot water and using a soft fatty soap (“surgras”) (not classic soaps as they are too irritant) every day.
  - Do not take a bath during your treatment, only showers.
  - We recommend you to pat yourself dry so as not to intensify the irritation of your skin..
  - In addition to this, it is not advisable, during your treatment and for a few weeks after it ends, to shave or use any kind of hair remover on the area to be treated.
  - Do not expose the treated area to the sun.
  
- With regard to clothing
  - Avoid wearing tight fitting clothes
  - Cotton clothing is best
  - Avoid wearing a bra as much as you can from the beginning of the treatment onwards.
  
- With regard to your diet
  - Eat a balanced diet
  - Watch your weight

Apply the cream (prescribed by your radiotherapist) from the very first session onwards (as soon as your return home after the session) and even at weekends, without forgetting the folds.

**BUT YOU MUST NOT PUT CREAM ON THE AREA BEING TREATED BEFORE THE SESSION**

## POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS OF RADIOTHERAPY

These are foreseeable, but do not necessarily occur, as each case is unique and each person reacts differently. However, some side-effects are fairly common and the radiotherapist and the care team keep an eye open for them. All these side effects will disappear a few weeks after the end of the treatment.

- Your skin
  - May become red (épidermite) or even inflamed in the treated area after two to three weeks of treatment.
  - If your skin is damaged, ask to see your radiotherapist without delay so he can prescribe a suitable cream for you.
  
- Your muscles :
  - Irritation of muscles in the treated area – the muscles you use when you move your arm.
  - If you have muscular pain in your arm, you need to tell the radiotherapist about it, so that he can prescribe a treatment if necessary.
  
- Tiredness :
  - This is not a sign that the illness is getting worse and does not arise in every case. It can be caused by the daily repetition of the treatment and due to the stresses of travelling to the

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treatment centre. In certain instances it can also sometimes be a result of surgery or chemotherapy (if this applies to you).

Do not hesitate to talk about these things to the care team and your radiotherapist either at your programmed appointments or at your own instigation

**YOU MUST NEVER INTERRUPT YOUR TREATMENT WITHOUT THE ADVICE OF YOUR RADIOTHERAPIST.**

### REMINDERS ABOUT THE PREVENTIVE ADVICE TO AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF A LYMPHOEDEMA IN THE ARM FOLLOWING SURGERY ON THE AXILLARY LYMPH NODES (Classic lymphnode dissection or sentinel lymphnode biopsy)

The aim of this advice is to avoid irritation to your hand and arm *on the side of the breast operated on*:

- Wear gloves for gardening, cooking and household tasks.
- Wear a thimble for sewing work.
- Avoid clothes or jewellery that fit tightly to your arm or wrist.
- Avoid as much as possible scratches or bites from pets.
- Avoid blood tests and blood pressure tests.
- Disinfect any cut or wound however small without delay.
- Arm yourself against insect bites.
- Avoid carrying heavy weights
- Avoid repetitious prolonged movements and do not hesitate to ration your exertion (e.g. sewing, ironing, window cleaning, vacuuming etc)
- Avoid stretching out your arm.
- Avoid sleeping on your arm.
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- Practising a sport or doing exercises is possible but provided you avoid putting your weight on your arm, or using it too energetically (examples of sports to avoid : tennis, golf, archery etc).

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