



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR RADIATION ONCOLOGIST

***Note: None of this information provided on this sheet constitutes medical or legal advice. Always consult with your medical care team. This compilation of questions is not comprehensive and is only meant for educational purposes. The below questions have been compiled from online resources such as cancer.net, breastcancer.org, and from those diagnosed with breast cancer in our survivingbreastcancer.org community. If you would like to add to this list, please contact info@survivingbreastcancer.org.

Understanding The Goal Of Treatment:

- What is the goal of this treatment? Is it to eliminate cancer? Is it to reduce pain?
- What are the chances that this treatment will prevent the cancer from coming back or spreading?
- How often will I receive radiation therapy? What is the typical schedule? Will it take place weekly, and for how many weeks? Are there alternatives to the recommended treatment?
- How much time will each treatment take?
- How will we measure the effectiveness of treatment?

Types and Location of Radiation:

- What type of radiation treatment will I be receiving?
- What areas will receive radiation? (Whole breast, chest wall, lymph nodes, bones, soft tissue?)
- What determines how many weeks of radiation I will have? I've heard some people have 5 to 6 weeks and others have 3 weeks?
- Will I need a radiation boost? If so, what does that mean?



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Prior to your first radiation session:

- Are there special services for patients receiving radiation therapy, such as certain parking spaces or parking rates?
- What is the typical timeline of radiation? What will my radiation timeline look like
- Can I bring someone with me to treatment? (This may depend on rules and regulations implemented due to COVID-19)
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?
- If I need to alter my day-to-day activities, how long will it be? A week? A month? A year?
- Will each treatment be the same? Does the radiation dose or area treat change throughout the period of treatment?
- What can I do to get ready for this treatment? Are there recommendations on what clothes to wear or leave behind?
- Will you describe what I will experience when I receive radiation therapy? Will it hurt or cause me discomfort during the treatment?

Radiation and Other Treatments?

- If I decide to have reconstructive surgery, how would that affect my treatment plan?
- Am I able to have radiation therapy specialized so that only a portion of my breast, bone, or soft tissue is treated? Does the entire area have to undergo radiation?
- Will radiation affect my overall survival rate? My life-expectancy?



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- What is the potential of my cancer coming back affected? How much is it lowered? If my cancer comes back, can I then undergo additional surgery or Radiation?
- Am I allowed to have radiation treatment concurrently with chemo or immunotherapy?
- Am I allowed to have radiation treatment concurrently with hormonal therapies like tamoxifen or an aromatase inhibitor?

Side Effects:

- What are the potential side effects of this treatment? How can I ease side effects?
- Who should I contact about any side effects I experience? And how soon?
- How will my skin be affected during radiation therapy?
- What do I use each day? Are there long-term effects presented to my other organs, like my heart and lungs?
- Are there certain damages that they have been exposed to in the process of radiation?
- Do I need to be concerned about sun exposure?
- Should I avoid certain foods, vitamins, or supplements?
- Should I avoid using deodorant or antiperspirant during treatment?
- What are the possible long-term effects of this treatment?
- Will radiation put me at risk for developing lymphedema?

After Radiation Treatment Ends:

- When are follow-up visits scheduled? Who is responsible for follow-up after radiation therapy?
- Who schedules my follow up mammograms, scans, and appointments?
- If the cancer comes back, can I get radiation therapy again?
- Will there be changes to my breast after radiation ends? If so, what should



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I expect?



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