



Radiation Treatment Overview Thoracic - Lung



During treatment, side effects MAY include:

Common:

- Fatigue
- Difficulty or pain when swallowing
- Red, warm and dry skin with some peeling
- Hair loss in the chest area
- Changes to your breathing caused by lung changes (e.g. inflammation) which may be permanent.
- New cough or a current cough that seems to be getting worse. This could be a dry cough or you could bring up phlegm.

Less Common:

- Reduced blood counts
- Fluid collection around the lung which can cause shortness of breath
- Chest wall pain

Rare but can be serious:

- Coughing up blood
- Shortness of breath caused by the airways narrowing

After treatment is finished, side effects MAY include:

Common:

- Long-term changes in skin appearance (e.g. darker, lighter or thinner)
- Changes to your breathing caused by lung changes (e.g. scarring or inflammation) which may be permanent.

Less Common:

- Permanent narrowing of the airway
- Damage to the esophagus/swallowing tube
- Fluid collection around the lung. This can cause shortness of breath.
- Increased risk of rib fracture
- Chest wall pain

Rare but can be serious:

- Coughing up blood
- Pericarditis (irritation of the heart). This causes a rapid heart rate, chest discomfort, or chest pain.
- Myocarditis (irritation of the heart muscle). This causes shortness of breath, chest pain, or permanent heart muscle damage.
- Shortness of breath caused by the airways narrowing
- Risk of an injury to any part of the body that has received radiation (e.g. spinal cord) during treatment. This may be serious, require major surgery and could be life threatening.
- There is a very low risk that a new cancer will be caused by the radiation in the future.

The severity of these side effects will vary from person to person. If you are having chemotherapy or are smoking during your radiation treatments side effects may be worse. When you begin your radiation treatments, the radiation therapists will give you information to help you manage the side effects. You will also be able to meet with your radiation oncologist during your treatments to talk about any side effects that you may have.

This list may not all apply to your radiation treatment. Please speak to your radiation oncologist to understand what to expect from your treatment.