

## Managing Radiation Therapy Side Effects

## What to do about changes when you urinate



“A few weeks into radiation therapy, it hurt when I urinated. My doctor told me to drink more water. He also told me about medicine that could help.”

### About urination changes

Radiation therapy can irritate the bladder and urinary tract. The discomfort usually goes away a few weeks after treatment is finished.

**Call your doctor or nurse if you have a fever of 100.5° F (38° C) or higher.**

**Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these changes:**

- Pain, cramps, or a burning feeling when you urinate
- A reddish color or blood in your urine
- Trouble starting to urinate
- Trouble getting all the urine out
- A feeling that you have to urinate right away
- Leaking a little urine when you sneeze or cough

### Learn about drinks that can help.

#### Drink more liquids.

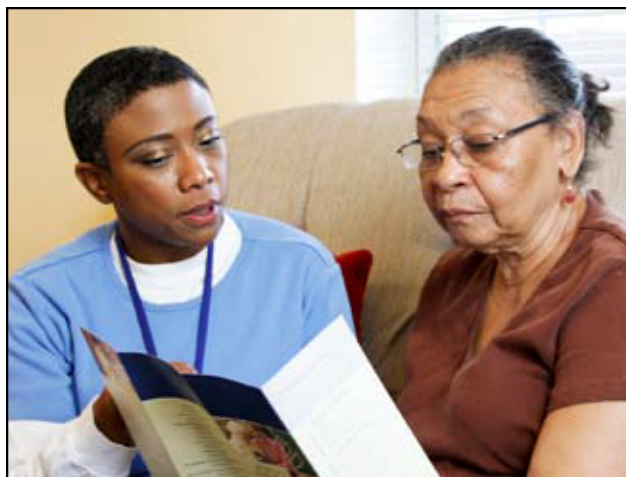
- Drink lots of liquids each day. Drink enough so that your urine is clear to light yellow in color.
- Water, cranberry juice, gelatin, and most soups are all good choices.
- Keep track of how much you drink. Talk with your doctor or nurse to make sure you are drinking enough each day.



## Ask about drinks or foods that you may need to avoid.

Some things can make these problems worse. Your doctor or nurse may suggest that you **limit or don't have:**

- Drinks with alcohol  
(such as beer, wine, and liquor)
- Drinks with caffeine  
(such as coffee and black tea)
- Drinks that are carbonated  
(such as sodas and colas)
- Spicy foods
- Tobacco products



## Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What changes am I likely to have?
2. What problems should I call you about?
3. How long might these problems last?
4. Are there medicines, exercises, or other steps I can take to feel better?
5. How much liquid should I drink each day?
6. Are there any drinks or foods that I should avoid?



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## How can we help?

### National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service

**Phone:** 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER)

**Web:** [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

**Online Chat:** [www.cancer.gov/livehelp](http://www.cancer.gov/livehelp)

NCI has a series of 9 Radiation Therapy Side Effects Fact Sheets at:  
[www.cancer.gov/radiation-side-effects](http://www.cancer.gov/radiation-side-effects)

