

## Side Effects from Radiation Treatment to the Whole Body

Your doctor has recommended that you have a course of radiation therapy. This leaflet contains information about the treatment and its short and long term side effects. Each person reacts differently to treatment so the side effects can be different for each person. This leaflet discusses the most common.

There are two types of common side effects with radiation treatment to the whole body. There are **short term** effects which happen during or shortly after the treatment and **long term** effects which **may** happen months to years later.

The **short term** side effects that may happen are:

- Lethargy/tiredness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Skin reaction - redness, dryness (similar to sunburn)
- Sore Mouth
- Inflammation of your salivary glands
- Hair loss
- Cough
- Low blood counts
- Diarrhoea
- Other:

While on treatment you will be seen weekly by your doctor, who will help you to manage these side effects if they happen.

The **long term** side effects that may happen are:

- Infertility
- Cataracts
- Lung fibrosis
- Thyroid deficiency
- It is very rare but radiation therapy can cause a second cancer
- Other:

If you have any concerns about the side effects of treatment, please discuss this with your doctor.

### **What happens now?**

Radiation treatment is given daily (Monday - Friday) for approximately \_\_\_ days. Before your course of radiation treatment can start you will need to attend the Oncology Department for the planning of your treatment. These appointments will be sent to you in the mail.

More information about radiation treatment and its side effects can be found in your information folder or through The Cancer Society. You can contact them on 0800 226237, visit their website ([www.cancernz.org.nz](http://www.cancernz.org.nz)) or visit them on the ground floor of the Oncology Department.

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