



PATIENT EDUCATION

Acute toxicity during sarcoma and bone radiation

A plain-language guide for patients and families. Bring this to your visit. It does not replace advice from your clinician.

Why these effects happen

Sarcoma and many bone-metastasis fields treat a limb, trunk, or spine segment. Skin, subcutaneous fat, and muscle in the beam get tired and swollen. If radiation is given after surgery, the wound is the main safety item. If it is given before surgery, the surgeon will watch healing later. Joints in the field stiffen if you stop moving them. This is adult sarcoma and bone-field care — not a childhood bone-tumor clinic sheet.

What often shows up by week

- Weeks 1 to 3: pink skin, tightness, or a heavy feeling in the limb.
- Mid-course: dry or moist peel in a fold, groin, or under a brace.
- Fatigue. A short flare of bone pain can occur before a metastasis field eases.
- Spine fields can add nausea or loose stool if bowel is in the exit path.

Confirm with your care team. A wound that opens, drains pus, or smells is a same-day call — do not add extra cream. Confirm brace, physical-therapy range, and dressing rules with your care team.

What you can expect

- The Skin care and Pain printouts pair with this sheet.
- Keep the motion they prescribed even on low-energy days, unless they said to rest a joint.



Self-care and medicine pointers

- Wash and pat dry. Bland ointment as written. Keep a surgical incision clean per the surgeon's card.
- Elevate a swollen limb if they said to. No tight jewelry on a treated arm or leg.
- Pain medicine before physical therapy if that is the plan. No heating pad on the field.

Monitor for (named conditions)

- **Radiation dermatitis** — pink, dry peel, or moist peel in the outline or under a brace.
- **Surgical wound dehiscence or infection** — opening, pus, fever, or spreading redness.
- **Limb edema. Joint stiffness** in a field that crosses a knee, hip, shoulder, or jaw.
- **Bone-pain flare** on a metastasis spot — or new weakness if a spine field is in play.
- **Acute enteritis** on some abdominal or pelvic sarcoma fields.
- **Nerve irritation** — new burning in a nerve path. **Blood clot** — one-sided calf swelling after limb treatment.

When to call the clinic vs go to the ER

- Same-day clinic: a wound that opens, moist skin under a brace, or pain that breaks the plan.
- ER or 911: fever with a red limb, sudden inability to walk or pass urine after a spine field, or chest pain with a swollen calf.

Questions to ask

- What range of motion must I keep this week?
- Who owns the wound — surgery or radiation nursing?
- What is my clot-prevention plan?

How to schedule or learn more

CureRays Radiation Medicine® 300 Sierra College Drive, Suite 150, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Toll free: (844) CURERAYS / (844) 287-3729 • Office: (530) 802-6400 • office@curerays.com • www.curerays.com

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