



PATIENT EDUCATION

Late toxicity after 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 late effects can appear

Muscle and connective tissue in a high-dose limb or trunk field can tighten for years (fibrosis). Bone in the field can weaken and break. Lymphatics can slow. Nerves and joints can stay painful. A second cancer in an old field is uncommon but is why a new mass still gets checked. This sheet is for adults. Childhood bone-tumor late-effects clinics use a different list.

What this sheet is for

Bring it to ortho-oncology, rehab, and primary care. A limp you 'got used to' can still be a fracture or a nerve problem worth naming.

Confirm with your care team. A snap, a sudden inability to bear weight, or a new mass in the old field is a same-week call. Confirm imaging of the bone, hardware checks, and lymphedema therapy with your care team.

Who usually follows you

- Orthopedic or surgical oncology plus radiation oncology.
- Rehab or a lymphedema therapist for a tight or swollen limb.
- Primary care for bone health if a large bone volume or pelvis was treated.



Monitor for (named conditions)

- **Soft-tissue fibrosis and joint contracture** — you cannot straighten or raise the limb as before.
- **Lymphedema** of the treated limb or trunk.
- **Pathologic or insufficiency fracture** in the irradiated bone — new pain, a snap, or you cannot bear weight.
- **Hardware failure** if you have a plate, rod, or prosthesis in the field.
- **Delayed wound breakdown** or a chronic ulcer over the field.
- **Peripheral neuropathy or plexopathy** — burning, numbness, or new weakness.
- **Growth-plate issues do not apply** to finished adult skeletons; limb-length talk is for pediatric clinics, not this sheet.
- **Secondary malignancy** (uncommon) — a new mass or skin change in the old field.
- **Infertility or ovarian/testicular failure** if a pelvic sarcoma field included the gonads.

Usual surveillance cadence (your letter wins)

- Sarcoma imaging of the primary site and chest on the interval they wrote.
- Ask about bone-density or X-ray if a weight-bearing bone was in a high-dose field and pain is new.
- Lifelong skin and limb checks of the outline. Keep stretching the way rehab taught you.

When to call

- Clinic: a new firm mass, a limb that will not move as far, or swelling that climbs.
- ER: you cannot bear weight after a snap, a cold pulseless limb, or sudden spinal weakness.

How to schedule or learn more

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