



PATIENT EDUCATION

Hair loss during radiation — what to expect

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

Hair loss is local

Radiation can thin or shed hair **where the beam exits and enters**, not over the whole body. A brain field may affect the scalp in that region. A neck field may thin a beard patch. Breast or pelvis fields do not shave your head. Whole-body hair loss is from some chemotherapy drugs, not from typical outpatient radiation.

What you may notice

- Shedding in the treatment field a couple of weeks into a course
- Tender or itchy scalp or skin as follicles rest
- Regrowth that is slower, finer, or a slightly different color later — not guaranteed timing
- Feelings of surprise or grief even when you “knew” it might happen

Care of the area

Use a mild shampoo. Pat dry. Avoid tight hats that rub raw skin; soft cotton is better. Do not dye or chemically straighten hair in a healing field unless the team says the skin is ready. Sun-cover the area.

Where CureRays may fit. Ask us to show you on the plan which hair is in the field. If a wig, scarf, or salon referral would help, say so early — waiting until the shed starts makes a busy week harder. Confirm scalp lotions with your clinician.

What you can expect

- Many skin and joint courses cause little or no hair change
- Higher-dose brain or skin fields are more likely to thin hair in-beam
- We cannot promise a date when hair returns; we can tell you what is typical for your dose



Practical tips

- **Photos.** A “before” picture is yours to take if you want it — no pressure.
- **Kids and coworkers.** A one-line explanation is enough if you want to give one.
- **Eyelashes and brows** thin only if those areas are in the field.
- **Insurance.** Some plans cover a cranial prosthesis — ask our staff for the form if relevant.

When to call the clinic

- Scalp sores, pus, or fever
- Painful shedding with blistering
- Sudden whole-body hair loss you did not expect from your medicine list — we should review it
- Distress that is getting in the way of coming to treatment

Questions to ask

- Which patches of hair are in my beam, in plain language?
- Is permanent thinning possible for my dose?
- When may I color or cut the remaining hair?
- Who can help with a wig or scarf if I want one?

How to schedule or learn more

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