



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Learning About Systemic Radiation Treatment

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Radiation treatment uses radioactive material to kill cancer cells or to keep them from growing. In systemic treatment, the material is given by mouth or put into a vein. It travels in the blood throughout the body and targets cancer cells. Then the radiation leaves the body through body fluids.

Systemic treatment is painless. But it can cause some side effects like fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Most side effects usually go away after the treatment ends. But you may feel very tired for 4 to 6 weeks afterwards. Your doctor can help treat the side effects. The treatment may also lower the number of certain blood cells in your body. Your doctor will watch your blood cell counts.

Before and during treatment, get plenty of rest. Eat healthy foods to keep your strength up. Your doctor will tell you what activities you can do during treatment.

When you find out that you have cancer, you may feel many emotions. You may need some help coping. Seek out family, friends, and counselors for support. You also can do things at home to make yourself feel better while you go through treatment. Call the American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345) or visit its website at www.cancer.org for more information. You can also call the National Cancer Institute (1-800-422-6237) or visit its website at www.cancer.gov.

What can you expect?

Your body will give off radiation for a short time after treatment. It will be in body fluids like sweat, saliva, urine, and stools (bowel movements). Your doctor will give you written instructions on how to protect other people from the radiation from your body. Follow those directions carefully. They will probably include instructions to:

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- Limit your contact with people, especially children and pregnant women.
- Use separate towels, plates, and utensils.
- Use a separate toilet if possible for 3 to 5 days.
- Close the toilet lid before you flush.
- Wash your hands well after you use the toilet.
- Drink lots of water to help flush the material from your body.

Call your doctor if you have any questions about your instructions.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter **J950** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About Systemic Radiation Treatment.**"

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