

# Information for Patients Receiving Radiation Therapy: Cystitis

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## What is cystitis?

Cystitis is an irritation and inflammation of the bladder lining.

## Who gets cystitis?

Cystitis is a common side effect when radiation treatment is given to the pelvis. It can occur when all or part of the bladder is treated with radiation.

## How do I know if I have cystitis?

A person with cystitis may have some or all of these problems:

- frequent passing of urine or passing small amounts
- feeling of urgency
- burning or pain on emptying bladder
- small amounts of blood/mucus in the urine
- feeling of not completely emptying your bladder

## When can cystitis happen?

Cystitis may occur about 1-2 weeks into treatment. It usually disappears 2 weeks after the treatment is completed.

## What should I do if I think I have cystitis?

Inform a member of your radiation treatment team if you have any of the symptoms of cystitis. Your doctor may prescribe some medication to help you.

**What are your questions? Please ask.  
We are here to help you.**

### **The following may help to reduce your problems with cystitis:**

- Drink 8-10 glasses of fluid a day to flush out the bladder and reduce the chance of infection.
- The best choice of fluids is water. Other fluids like milk, pear juice, and chamomile tea also seem to be well tolerated.
- Foods like cranberry juice, tomatoes, spicy foods, tea, coffee, carbonated beverages, and alcohol appear to cause the most irritation to people with cystitis. Avoid these foods when you have cystitis.

You may be asked to provide a sample of urine in order to rule out an infection. If you do get a bladder infection while on treatment, you will be given antibiotics to treat it.

### **Questions you may want to ask your Health Care Team**

- Is my cancer treatment likely to cause me to get cystitis?
- Is there anything I can do to prevent getting cystitis?
- Are there any diet or life style changes that will reduce the symptoms of cystitis?

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*Prepared by: Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program  
Approved by: NSCCP Patient Education Committee  
Designed by: Nova Scotia Cancer Care Program Staff*

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