Radiation Therapy to the Brain

Radiation therapy to the brain does affect your hair. About 2 weeks after your first treatment, you may notice that you will begin to lose your hair. If your hair loss is temporary, it will probably re-grow about 3-6 months after your treatment is complete. You may decide to have your hair cut short prior to starting radiation therapy or purchase a wig or hat. The following instructions will help you care for this area and decrease the effects of radiation.

Skin Care
- You may wash your hair once a week with baby shampoo. Pat dry with a soft towel. Do not use a hair dryer.
- If your scalp begins to look tanned or red or becomes dry and flaky, notify your nurse or doctor. This is a short-term reaction. A prescription cream may be ordered. Do not use home remedies.
- During your treatment a scarf or hat should be worn to protect your scalp from sun or cold. We suggest that during treatment you only wear your wig for 2-3 hours a day at most. About 1 month after your treatment is done; you may wear your wig as much as you like. Expose the treated area to the air as much as possible. Stay away from very hot or cold temperatures and direct sun. Avoid swimming during the course of treatment. After treatment is completed, we advise that you do not go swimming or expose the scalp to the sun for 1 month. When you return for the one-month checkup, this will be discussed.

Medicine - Decadron
- While you are receiving treatment, you may be taking a medicine called dexamethasone (Decadron). This medicine decreases the swelling caused by the tumor.
- Decadron may cause
  - an increase in appetite
  - urination frequency
  - swelling
  - leg cramps
  - mood change

  These are expected and short-term side effects of Decadron, but should be reported to your nurse or doctor.

During your treatment the amount of Decadron will be decreased using a written schedule. Do not decrease this medicine without be your doctor or nurse’s instruction.
**Medicine – Vitamins**
You may take one multi-vitamin daily. Do not take anti-oxidants or mega-vitamins during your radiation therapy.

**Birth Control**
It is important to **use birth control** during treatment and for some time after treatment completes.

Please remember, if you have any questions or concerns, please ask your radiation team or call us at (315) 464-5276. We will be happy to answer your questions.