



Skin care following radiotherapy to the breast

This information is to help you look after your skin after you have finished your course of radiotherapy.

It is important for you to know that the effects on your skin will carry on and may get worse for seven to ten days after you have finished your treatment. For a few patients this may continue for another two to three weeks. During this time your skin will become red, itchy and fragile. For these reasons you should continue to apply a mild unperfumed moisturiser to unbroken skin for at least 14 days.

However, you may also find that the skin in the area treated becomes moist and broken and if this happens you will need to treat this area as described below:

- Keep the area clean by washing it gently with water only (no soap or shower gel). Pat dry gently.
- **Contact your GP or practice nurse** and ask for some **Hydrogel** (we suggest **Purilon gel** or **Intrasite gel**). It is also available as ready prepared dressings called **Mepitel**, **Polymem** and **Actiform Cool**. Other products that could be used are **Cavilon**, **Flamazine**, or **DERMA-S**. Any of these products are suitable. (It may be useful to show this leaflet to your GP or practice nurse.)
- Continue to treat the broken skin until healed (usually for 10 - 14 days). Return to your GP or practice nurse if you need more dressings or advice.

If you or your GP need further information please contact:

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre
Outpatient Nurses :020 3826 2192
Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 5.30pm

Or

Mount Vernon Cancer Centre
Clinic Radiographers: 020 3826 2612
or 07825 024058
Mon - Fri: 9am - 5pm

If using Purilon gel or Intrasite gel:

1. Clean the affected area by washing it gently with water only and pat dry gently.
2. Apply the gel to the affected area, or to a non-stick gauze dressing.
3. Cover the affected area with the dressing.
4. If possible, avoid using tape. If tape is needed to secure the dressing, use only paper tape. Make sure it is not applied to any sore areas. Paper tape is available from your pharmacist.
5. Apply fresh dressings morning and evening.

If using Mepitel or Actiform gel dressings:

1. Clean the affected area by washing it gently with water and pat dry gently.
2. Apply the dressings to the affected area.
3. Cover with a non-stick gauze dressing.
4. If possible avoid using tape. If tape is needed to secure the dressing, use only paper tape. Make sure it is not applied to any sore areas. Paper tape is available from your pharmacist.
5. Mepitel dressings can be left in place. Fresh non-stick gauze dressings should be applied morning and evening.

If using Polymem dressings:

1. Clean the affected area by washing it gently with water and pat dry gently.
2. Apply to the affected area.
3. If possible avoid using tape. If tape is needed to secure the dressing, use only paper tape. Make sure it is not applied to any sore areas. Paper tape is available from your pharmacist.
4. Polymem dressings can be left in place for up to seven days.

Other help and support

People who have cancer often say that during their illness they experience a range of emotions. Many find it to be a stressful, anxious and confusing time.

If you would like further information about any aspect of cancer and its treatments, including the supportive services offered at the LJMC, please drop in to the centre or call the Helpline.

The staff at the LJMC work as part of the overall team caring for you and include healthcare professionals and trained volunteers. The centre provides a relaxed setting in which to talk and ask questions.

The LJMC is situated between the main Cancer Centre building and Gate 3 (White Hill).

 **Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre**
... supporting people affected by cancer...

Services offered at the LJMC include:

- ① Drop-in centre
- ① Telephone helpline
- ① Benefits advice*
- ① Complementary therapies*
- ① Relaxation classes
- ① Counselling*
- ① Look Good...Feel Better™ beauty workshops
- ① The Way Ahead headwear workshops
- ① Self-help courses

* These services are only available to NHS patients under the care of an oncologist based at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

Mon-Fri: **9.30am–4.30pm**

Telephone Helpline: **020 3826 2555**

Website: **www.ljmc.org**