Members Sharing
Managing the Common Side Effects of RT

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NCCS NPC Support Group Talk
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All survivors, without exception, will face these side effects after treatment.

The difference is the degree of severity depending on the location of the tumour and where the RT rays are directed.
Managing the Common Side Effects

Post Recovery Care

- Nose Flushing
- Dry Mouth/Loss of Taste
- Hearing Loss
- Neck & Jaw Tightening
- Oral & Dental Care
- Appetite/Weight Issues
- Hypothyroidism
Nose Flushing

Cause
- Area in nose is dry due to damage from RT

To Do
1) Sodium Bicarbonate & Sea Salt combination to flush nose daily
2) Do it as part of daily toilet twice a day
3) Remove mucus & phlegm
Dry Mouth/Loss of Taste

Cause
- Permanent damage to the salivary glands resulting in thicken little or no saliva

To Do
1) Carry water bottle & sip regularly to wet the lips and mouth area
2) Meals with soup based food
3) Vegetables & Fruits are best friends
Hearing Loss

Cause
- Back flow of liquid to ears, causing blockage resulting in hearing loss

To Do
1) See ENT doctor for regular ear toilet
2) Use a Hearing Aid Device
3) Medical treatment includes:--
   a) Myringotomy
   b) Grommet tube insertion
   c) Cochlear implant
Neck & Mouth Tightening

Cause
- Tightening of the muscles
- One of the most severe side effects that can happen even 10 years after treatment

To Do
1) Neck – Turing the head right to left on a daily basis to release the tightening
2) Mouth – Opening the mouth and holding it to 3 fingers
Neck & Mouth Tightening (Cont’d)

1) Rolling the tongue around the mouth to keep it flexible
2) Voice slurring - See Speech Therapist for follow up
3) Careful when eating to avoid choking
4) In severe cases damage to the valve regulating between air and food requiring tube insertion for liquid food feeding
Oral & Dental Care

Cause
- Tooth decay and related issues due to loss of salivary enzyme

To Do
1) Brush teeth after each meal
2) Use high based Fluoride tooth paste or gel to keep teeth healthy
3) See dentist regularly for checks
Appetite & Weight issues

Cause
- Loss of appetite and difficulty in putting on loss weight

To Do
1) Important to eat well and a balanced diet
2) Soft or liquid based food during recovery and gradually going onto normal diet
3) No specific food to avoid but to each his own
Hypothyroidism – fatigue, feeling cold, cramps, forgetfulness etc

**Cause**
- Hormonal changes associated with npc treatment

**To Do**
1) Life long medication – best to avoid if possible
2) Learn to live and cope with it
The sharing are all real. But please use your discretion as our bodies are all different.

The way forward is to experience on a small scale and see if it works for you before attempting it fully.
Dealing with the Side Effects

- Accept, Adapt, Adjust
- Share & learn from one another as each have found their own ways to deal with it
- Enjoy what you have and don’t dwell on what is already lost
- Count your blessings as there are positives from all these
Managing the Emotion Side Effects

Emotion is the hardest side effect to deal with as it gets to the survivor

Symptoms
- Fear and Distress
- Confusion and Uncertainty
- Loss of purpose in life
- Loss of appetite
Dealing with the Side Effects

Remedy

- Accept, Adapt, Adjust
- Need to be mental strong to overcome the emotion & cancer
- Cancer is over – don’t dwell on it
- Find something meaningful to do
- Get on with life because

Life is For Living
Live it to the Fullest