

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 – Turning 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**