



Risk for Breast Cancer after Treatment for Childhood Cancer

What's the risk?

Your risk for breast cancer can go up after radiation therapy that includes the anterior chest wall, even in patients who have not yet developed breasts. Having radiation to the chest puts a woman at a higher risk of developing breast cancer than women of the same age group. Also, the higher the dose of radiation you get, the greater the risk.

Modern therapy and radiation techniques have limited the amount of radiation to normal tissues, so the risk may go down as time goes on.

The increased risk of breast cancer usually does not occur until the mid-20s and/or at least 8 years after radiation therapy.

Talk to Your Care Team

- Let your team know if you had radiation treatment to your chest as a child.
- Let your team know if you notice any changes to your breasts, lumps, or bumps.

Prevention and Treatment

If you had radiation to your chest as part of childhood cancer treatment, you may need to start screening for breast cancer early. When and what type of screening test you should have depends on where on your body you had radiation and the dose. When breast cancer screening begins early, it usually begins in the mid-20s or 8 years after radiation exposure (whichever occurs later).

General cancer prevention should also be used like a healthy diet, physical activity, not smoking tobacco, and knowing your family history of cancer.

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