

## Radiation Esophagitis

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Radiation esophagitis is when the lining of your throat becomes inflamed or bothered from radiation. It is a common side effect from radiation treatment to the neck or chest. Most often it happens about 2 weeks after radiation starts. It may not go away for 3 to 4 weeks after all treatment is done. Late radiation esophagitis is a less common side effect that can happen at least 3 months after radiation treatments are done.

Side effects may happen because the radiation used to kill cancer can also harm healthy cells around the treatment site. Side effects differ from person to person, ranging from none to severe.

### Symptoms of radiation esophagitis

- Problems swallowing – painful or hard to swallow
- Feels like food or medicine is getting stuck in your throat
- Burning feeling in neck or chest
- Mild chest pain
- Sore throat or feels like a lump in your throat

### Ways to manage

- Tell your care team if you are having any of the problems listed above. Your doctor may order heartburn medicine to help manage your symptoms.
- Talk to a dietitian – they can suggest items that are easier to eat and drink and high calorie and high protein options
- Eat soft, bland foods such as mashed potatoes and eggs
- Cut food into small pieces and chew well. Avoid crunchy, hard or tough foods
- Avoid spicy and acidic foods, caffeine, alcohol and fizzy drinks like pop
- Try protein shakes or smoothies. Eat 5 to 6 small meals instead of 3 large meals
- Eat foods that are neither too hot or too cold