

MY JOURNEY WITH RADIATION

What to Expect & How you can heal

It doesn't matter how much meditation or prayer you do, that first radiation treatment is scary!

I changed out of my clothes and into the provided hospital and into my room and sat in the lounge area. Kinda feels like you are going to the spa, BUT you are not. When the tech came and got me I felt like I was having an out of body experience... Like I was watching myself.

It's so weird walking down that hallway the first time. I walk in the room, I see my machine and the machine has eyes, lashes and a little bow (Roxy, the radiator). For some reason that made me feel SO much better.

I got on the table and as they were positioning me, I started praying. A tip that one of my friends from Instagram gave me was to pick someone each day to pray for. And EVEN let that friend know. It truly helps SO much because it takes it off of you! Plus by telling that person they will hopefully be thinking and praying for you as you are going through it.

Okay, so the positioning takes a bit. In fact, it's probably longer than the actual radiation. Once they feel like the tattoos are matched up (yes, you get little dot tattoos, but honestly I can barely see mine), then they do an x-ray, to make sure all is aligned.



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Then they leave the room and treatment begins...

If you have left sided breast cancer like me, you have to hold your breath during treatment so it elongates your heart to get it out of the way of the beam. I was worried about this, but no worries.. If you start breathing the machine stops. I practiced at home before I went in, which made me more comfortable. I would time myself to see how long I could go.

Then I would focus on counting while it was going. I also pictured any cancer cells popping during the treatment. I think holding your breath actually helps to distract yourself during the treatment... And it's FAST.... Maybe like 5 mins.

I felt badass after that first treatment.. I felt SO powerful. I was SO scared prior to it, and as you go through these scary things you are going to realize how strong you truly are.

Day 1 of radiation...

This isn't typical, but weird things do happen. My left breast was swollen and warm to the touch.. I think my breast was angry, like what are you doing?? But that went away the next day.

Middle of radiation treatments.. Fatigue is setting in (AGAIN, everyone is different, so you may not experience this):



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BUT, you fall into such a routine: I fully know what's going to happen:

1. I get on the table, they start positioning me by moving the blanket. They want you to lay super still, heavy body, your arms are above your head, holding these handles. As they're doing this, I'm praying for someone.
2. They take pictures
3. When “Roxy the radiator” is positioned and I hear the buzzing sound, I know it's go time.
4. When it starts I have to work on my breath work and pray that God's hands are on me protecting my other organs. And I'm picturing the cancer cells popping.

It's SO important to have positive thoughts about what you are doing...

Instead of thinking of it as poisoning you, think of it as saving your life. The way you picture your treatment is super important. Instead of looking at all the negative things that can happen from it, look at how it's going to get rid of the cancer and heal you!

MY GIRLS OINTMENT

**Schedule your appointments early if you can
Meditate**



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What can help you through fatigue:

There's a difference between tired and fatigue. Tiredness happens to everyone - it's an expected feeling after certain activities or at the end of the day. Usually, you know why you're tired, and a good night's sleep solves the problem. Fatigue is a daily lack of energy; unusual or excessive whole-body tiredness not relieved by sleep. It's a whole body experience... It's kinda crazy.

Feeling very tired and lacking energy for day-to-day activities is a common side effect of radiation therapy to any area of the body. During treatment, your body uses a lot of energy dealing with the effects of radiation on normal cells. It usually builds up slowly during the course of treatment, particularly towards the end, and may last for some weeks or months after treatment finishes. Many people find that they cannot do as much as they normally would, but others are able to continue their usual activities.

But **REMEMBER**, everyone is going to handle this differently. Some people get through this so easily. Everyone has their unique experience with it.

I thought I was going to **POWER** through it, but I did not, Fatigue hit me pretty quickly.

Give yourself grace - **REST** when you need it! You are helping your body to heal! And it needs it right now! When you have energy, get the important things done! Just make sure you are taking some things off your plate.



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After completing radiation treatment for cancer, it is crucial to focus on healing and supporting your body's recovery.

The following ways to heal from radiation can help you manage side effects, boost your immune system, and improve your overall well-being:

- 1. Chlorophyll:** Chlorophyll is a natural pigment found in green plants, and it can be consumed as a dietary supplement or obtained from foods like spinach, kale, and parsley. Chlorophyll has antioxidant properties that can help protect your cells from further damage and promote tissue repair.
- 2. Supplementing with Melatonin at Night:** Melatonin is a hormone that regulates sleep-wake cycles. Taking melatonin supplements at night may improve your sleep quality, which is essential for your body's healing and recovery. Adequate sleep also supports the immune system.
- 3. Green Tea:** Green tea is rich in antioxidants called polyphenols, which can help reduce inflammation and protect cells from radiation-induced damage. Drinking green tea regularly can also be soothing and hydrating for your body.
- 4. Foods Rich in Pectin:** Pectin is a water-soluble fiber found in fruits like apples, citrus fruits, and berries. Consuming pectin-rich foods can help with digestive health and may alleviate gastrointestinal side effects often associated with radiation therapy.



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- 5. Cruciferous Vegetables:** Vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts are part of the cruciferous family and contain compounds like sulforaphane, which have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. These vegetables can support the body's natural detoxification processes.
- 6. Infrared Sauna:** Infrared saunas generate heat that penetrates the body's tissues, promoting relaxation and improving circulation. This can aid in pain relief and detoxification, helping your body recover more effectively after radiation treatment.
- 7. Foods High in Iodine:** Iodine-rich foods like seaweed, nori, and cod can help support thyroid function. Radiation therapy can sometimes affect the thyroid gland, and maintaining its health is crucial for overall well-being.
- 8. Ginger and Ginseng:** Both ginger and ginseng have anti-inflammatory and anti-nausea properties. They can be beneficial for managing nausea, improving appetite, and reducing inflammation during the recovery phase.
- 9. Clay Bath:** Clay baths are believed to help draw out toxins from the body through the skin. Taking a clay bath can provide relaxation and potentially aid in detoxification.
- 10. Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy:** Hyperbaric oxygen therapy involves breathing pure oxygen in a pressurized chamber. It may help improve tissue oxygenation, reduce inflammation, and promote healing of radiation-damaged tissues.



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It's essential to remember that these methods should be discussed with your healthcare team before incorporating them into your post-radiation treatment recovery plan.

They can provide guidance on what's appropriate for your specific situation and ensure that these approaches complement your overall treatment and recovery process.

Additionally, maintaining a balanced diet, staying hydrated, and engaging in light physical activity as advised by your healthcare provider are also crucial aspects of post-radiation recovery.

