

What to do about changes when you urinate



“A few weeks into radiation therapy, it hurt when I urinated. My doctor told me to drink more water. He also told me about medicine that could help.”

About urination changes

Radiation therapy can irritate the bladder and urinary tract. The discomfort usually goes away a few weeks after treatment is finished.

Call your doctor or nurse if you have a fever of 100.5° F (38° C) or higher.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these changes:

- Pain, cramps, or a burning feeling when you urinate
- A reddish color or blood in your urine
- Trouble starting to urinate
- Trouble getting all the urine out
- A feeling that you have to urinate right away
- Leaking a little urine when you sneeze or cough

Learn about drinks that can help.

Drink more liquids.

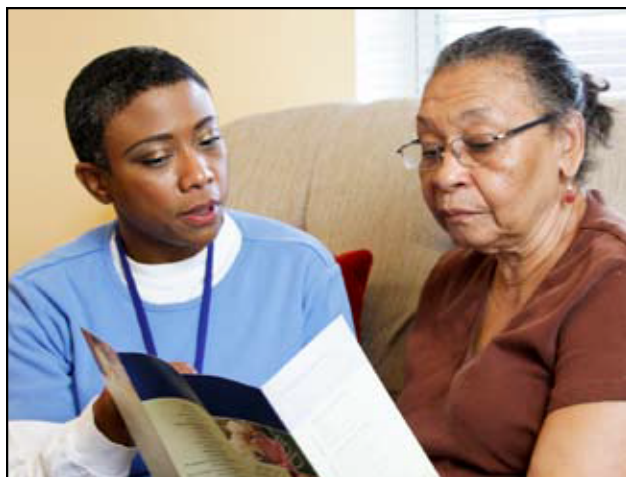
- Drink lots of liquids each day. Drink enough so that your urine is clear to light yellow in color.
- Water, cranberry juice, gelatin, and most soups are all good choices.
- Keep track of how much you drink. Talk with your doctor or nurse to make sure you are drinking enough each day.



Ask about drinks or foods that you may need to avoid.

Some things can make these problems worse. Your doctor or nurse may suggest that you **limit or don't have:**

- Drinks with alcohol
(such as beer, wine, and liquor)
- Drinks with caffeine
(such as coffee and black tea)
- Drinks that are carbonated
(such as sodas and colas)
- Spicy foods
- Tobacco products



Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What changes am I likely to have?
2. What problems should I call you about?
3. How long might these problems last?
4. Are there medicines, exercises, or other steps I can take to feel better?
5. How much liquid should I drink each day?
6. Are there any drinks or foods that I should avoid?



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How can we help?

National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service

Phone: 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER)

Web: www.cancer.gov

Online Chat: www.cancer.gov/livehelp

NCI has a series of 9 Radiation Therapy Side Effects Fact Sheets at:
www.cancer.gov/radiation-side-effects

