

Saline Compresses for Radiation Skin Reactions

During radiation treatment, your skin may get red and sore in the treatment area. Your Care Team may suggest using saline compresses on the treatment area.

Saline compresses are used to:

1. Reduce discomfort
2. Clean open areas
3. Help prevent infection

You can make your own saline solution at home, or purchase saline from your pharmacy.

How to Make Saline Solution

What you'll need:

- Clean pot with a lid
- 2-cup size measuring cup
- A teaspoon
- Salt
- Water



Instructions:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Pour 2 cups of water and 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of salt into the pot. Cover with lid.
3. Bring solution to a boil.
4. Boil solution gently for 15 minutes.
5. Cool to room temperature.
6. Keep pot covered with lid for the whole day.
7. Saline should be made fresh each day.

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How to Apply Saline Compress

- Wash your hands.
- Open packages of gauze squares. You can get gauze squares at a drug store.
- Place gauze on clean plate or bowl and pour cooled saline solution over gauze squares.



Gauze squares

Note: a clean white washcloth can be used instead of gauze squares, provided the skin is still intact. The gauze/washcloth soaked with saline is called a saline compress.

- Place saline compresses on your skin for about 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, remove the saline compress. Do not rub dry.
- Discard the used compress. Do not reuse compress.

Saline compresses can be applied 3-4 times a day or as needed.

If you are having side effects related to your cancer treatment, please contact:

Symptom Support Telephone Service



**During the day:
Cancer Centre Symptom Support
705-728-9090 x79565**



**Evenings, weekends and holidays:
Bayshore CAREchart 1-877-681-3057**

To cancel or change your appointment, please call 705-728-9090 x43333. Please visit www.rvh.on.ca for the latest information and hours of operation.