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DEPARTMENT: Heart Health

Skin Care after Interventional Procedures using Fluoroscopy

Information for patients who may experience effects from fluoroscopic exposure during interventional procedures.

1. What is a radiation skin reaction?

Although radiation does not burn you, the changes to your skin appear like sunburns. Changes appear slowly over time and only in the area exposed during the procedure.

The interventional physician will show you the area that may be affected. They will explain what you can expect, how to treat it and when to seek additional medical advice.

Please Note: you cannot prevent a skin reaction. You can minimize the symptoms, however.

- Being gentle with your skin
- Keep your skin clean and moisturized
- Protect the skin from other sources of damage, such as sun exposure and extreme temperatures

2. Expected Skin reactions

Immediate: (within 24 hours)

- Your skin may feel irritated during your procedure.
- The skin may also become red and swollen.
- Your skin may also feel dry, tight and/or itchy

Delayed: (within 2-3 weeks)

- Your skin may show patches of redness in the area identified by the interventional physician upon discharge.
- There may be flaking of the skin (do not peel the skin)
- There may be itching and sensitivity in the area.

3. Care for your skin

- Keep clean and dry
- Wash with a mild soap and lukewarm water, avoid scrubbing, pat dry
- Avoid perfumed products, alcohol and other irritants
- Wear loose fitting clothing
- Avoid sun exposure
- Avoid Pools and Saunas, or rinse afterwards
- Avoid ice packs or heating pads on the area
- **Liberal use of unscented, lanolin free, water based moisturizer, at least twice a day**
- If the area is itchy, discuss use of hydrocortisone with your primary care physician

When to see additional medical help:

If your skin becomes blistered, infected or is bleeding

- See a physician. Do not treat this skin reaction on your own.
- Inform the physician you have had radiation in the irritated area and what date that occurred.
- If you are referred to a dermatologist, inform the dermatologist that you have had radiation in the irritated area and what date that occurred.