UW Medicine

Side Effects of Radiation to the Eye

After treatment for cancer

This handout lists possible short-term and long-term side effects that patients may have after receiving radiation treatment to the eye.

Short-term

- Irritation to the *conjunctiva* (the thin layer of cells that covers the front of your eye)
- Loss of eyelashes
- Reddening, swelling of the eyelid or skin around the eyes (*periorbital erythema*)
- Eye irritation, with tearing and swelling
- Fatigue (feeling very tired)
- Inflamed *cornea* (surface of the eye), called *keratitis*

Long-term Side Effects

- Blurring in the lens of the eye (*cataracts*), which may need surgery
- Pressure in the eyeball (glaucoma)
- Dry eye, which requires regular use of eye drops to protect the cornea

Rare Side Effects

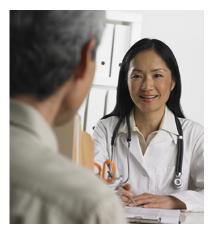
- Disease of the retina (*retinopathy*)
- An open sore on the cornea (corneal ulceration)
- Vision loss
- Cancers caused by the radiation (*secondary malignancy*)



Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call Radiation Oncology at 206.598.4100.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Radiation Oncologist on call.



Please talk with your care provider if you have questions or concerns about any of these side effects.