



Saline Soak Instructions

This handout offers information on how to do a saline soak. Side effects of radiation therapy treatment may cause your skin to redden (like a sunburn) in the area that is treated. A saline soak helps to add moisture to the skin to promote healing.

Put a saline soak on your reddened skin 3 to 4 times a day for 10 to 15 minutes each time. Continue the saline soaks until the area has healed. Plan to do a relaxing activity while you have your saline soak, such as phone a friend, listen to music, play relaxation tapes or have a nap.

What you need to make the saline solution

- A pot, water, a clean small bowl, salt, teaspoon, clean jar with a lid, and a clean lint-free soft cloth (a face cloth or reusable towel).

How to make the saline solution

1. Mix 4 cups (1 cup = 250 ml) of water with 1 teaspoon of salt in a pot.
2. Boil the water and salt for 10 minutes on the stove top. This makes the “saline solution”.
3. Let the saline solution cool down to room temperature.
4. Pour the saline solution into a clean jar. Close the jar with a lid or plastic wrap.
5. The jar of solution may be kept in the refrigerator or at room temperature.
6. Make a new saline solution every 24 hours (once a day).

How to put on the saline soak

1. Wash your hands.
2. Place the clean lint-free soft cloth in a clean bowl.
3. Pour the saline solution into the bowl until the cloth is wet.
4. Sit or lie down.
5. Uncover the reddened, cracked, or open area of your skin.
6. Gently squeeze the cloth to ring out excess water.
7. Put the cloth on the reddened, cracked, or open area of your skin for 10 to 15 minutes.
8. Remove the cloth. If it dries, pour on more saline solution before removing it from your skin.
9. Leave the area uncovered until it is dry.
10. Wash your hands.

Use a clean cloth and bowl each time you do the saline soak.

If you have a problem or concern about a symptom or side effect from your cancer treatment:

1. Call your primary nurse at the cancer centre from Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm, (except on holidays). Use the phone number your primary nurse gave you.
2. Contact CareChart Digital Health from Monday to Friday, 5 pm to 8:30 am and anytime on weekends and holidays for symptom management support.

Talk to a nurse using one of these options:

- Call the after-hours telephone line at 1-877-681-3057.
- Request a video call by going to carechart.ca.
- Use the CareChart Digital Health App. This App is available to download for iOS or Android devices.

Call 911 or go to the Emergency Department at the hospital closest to you for a medical emergency. Talk to a member of your healthcare team if you have questions or do not understand any information in this handout.

Last reviewed: March 2025