

YOUR GUIDE

to BREAST CANCER Surgery
at Sky Ridge Medical Center



Sky Ridge Breast Center

Patients with a new diagnosis of breast cancer often feel overwhelmed with decisions and are anxious about what will happen next.

The Sky Ridge Breast Center helps patients and their loved ones navigate the information and decisions in a compassionate way as they learn how to deal with their disease.

We hope this guide will help you maneuver the journey much more smoothly.



Welcome to Sky Ridge Medical Center

We are pleased that you and your physician have selected Sky Ridge Medical Center for your care. We are committed to providing the highest quality healthcare to you through a team that specializes in cancer care and believes in creating “beyond your expectations” experiences.

This guide will provide you with education and information about your upcoming surgery. If you have any questions or concerns during your stay, please don't hesitate to ask your physician, nurses, physical/occupational therapists or other staff members for assistance.

We look forward to helping you return to a healthier, more active lifestyle. A few of our amenities are listed below:

Complimentary Valet Parking – patients and visitors may use our complimentary valet service at the main entrance of the hospital. Hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Guest Information – The main entrance of the hospital is open from 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. weekdays and from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekends. After those hours, visitors may enter through the Emergency Department. We do not have set visiting hours, but ask that your friends and family be sensitive to your recovery needs. Each patient room includes a futon, so that your loved one may spend the night or relax while visiting with you.



Pre-Admission Testing Nurse – Have you scheduled your appointment with our Pre-Admission Testing Nurse? If not, here are a few tips that will help us have timely, accurate information for your surgery:

- Please schedule your appointment within two weeks of your surgery date, and at least three days prior to the surgery.
- Allow at least one hour for your appointment.
- Call 720-225-1667 to schedule your appointment.
- Bring a list of your current medications and your health/surgical history to the appointment. If your physician has provided you with orders, please bring those with you as well.
- For your convenience, consider scheduling this appointment adjacent to another time you are on the Sky Ridge campus.

Surgical Waiting and Hospitality Pagers – While you are in surgery, your family members and/or friends are invited to enjoy our spacious, relaxing surgery waiting area. We have flat screen televisions and wireless internet access. In addition, our “patient tracker” system will enable them to follow you through your procedure. The Sky Ridge Café, our coffee shop with Starbucks brewed coffee, and the Healing Garden are just a short walk from the waiting area. And, we offer hospitality pagers, similar to what you might find in a restaurant, to let your loved ones know that the surgeon has completed the procedure. If they need to leave the campus, we are happy to ask for a cell phone number so that we can update them following the surgery.



Out of Town Accommodations – We have arranged special medical rates with a number of area hotels. Please visit our website at www.skyridgemedcenter.com for information. If you need additional assistance, call our patient concierge at 720-225-1998.

Tobacco Free Campus – To promote a healthy lifestyle, Sky Ridge is a tobacco free campus. If you or a loved one smoke, you might want to consider stopping prior to your surgery. In addition to talking to your doctor about options, resources include the Colorado Quitline at www.quitline.org or 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) and www.co.quitnet.com or 1-800-639-QUIT (1-800-639-7848).

Dining – While a patient at Sky Ridge, you may order your meals from our Skylight interactive television or simply call the DINE line at x3463. Your family members may purchase vouchers in the Sky Ridge Café and place meal orders along with you.

Wireless Internet Access/Website – Keeping in touch with family and friends can be an important part of the healing process. In addition to wireless internet access throughout the hospital, you may use your cell phone in virtually any area.

Skylight Interactive Television – Our Skylight interactive television system provides you with not only television choices, but a wealth of information on your medical condition, health education, relaxation ideas, food choices and more. You can also enjoy a selection of great Hollywood movies and games for free. Simply use the control buttons on your pillow speaker to navigate your television.

Sincerely,

Your Cancer Care Team

Table of Contents

Oncology Healthcare Team Roles.....	5
Key Questions to Ask Your Doctor.....	6
Understanding Chemotherapy.....	7
Understanding Radiation Therapy	9
Understanding Breast Reconstruction Options	10-11
Preparing for Surgery.....	12
Nutrition	13-14
Managing Pain	15
What is Lymphedema.....	16
Resources	17-19

Important phone numbers:

Inpatient Oncology Unit: 720-225-6200

Radiation Therapy Department: 720-225-4200

Sky Ridge Infusion Center: 720-225-1644

Lymphedema Services: 720-225-1030

Cancer Exercise Program: 720-225-1030

Support Group Information: 720-225-CARE (2273)

Cancer Care Line: 720-225-CARE (2273)

Oncology Care Coordinator: 720-225-CARE (2273)

Breast Health Navigator: 720-225-CARE (2273)

Oncology Healthcare Team Roles and Responsibilities

Medical Oncologist – A physician trained in the treatment of cancer, particularly with non-surgical treatments such as chemotherapy and biotherapy. The medical oncologist will decide if there are medications or clinical trials appropriate for you, and educate you about their expected effectiveness and any potential side effects. The medical oncologist is generally in charge of the treatment plan and works in conjunction with the surgeon or radiation oncologist.

Breast Radiologist – A physician specializing in diagnosing breast cancer through the use of mammography, breast ultrasound or breast MRI. The breast radiologist also specializes in minimally invasive needle biopsy techniques using the previously mentioned types of imaging for guidance.

Surgeon – The surgeon's role in cancer treatment is to review your diagnostic information and decide whether operating to remove the cancer is a recommended treatment.

Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon – The plastic surgeon's role, should you choose to use one, is to communicate your options for breast reconstruction after you decide upon the most appropriate treatment for your breast cancer. If your treatment includes removal of the breast, there are many options that could be considered for reconstruction.

Radiation Oncologist – This is a physician specifically trained in the treatment of cancer with radiation. The radiation oncologist works with you to determine the appropriate radiation dose and specific way to deliver the radiation to your cancer to minimize radiation exposure to your normal, healthy cells.

Interventional Radiologist – Interventional radiologists are board-certified physicians who specialize in minimally invasive, targeted treatments.

Nurses – Our nurses are specially trained in oncology care. They are here to answer any questions you might have.

Radiation Therapists – Radiation therapists work with patients going through setup and treatment with radiation therapy. They will help you get properly positioned for radiation treatment and operate the radiation therapy equipment to deliver your prescribed dose of radiation.

Nutritionist – A registered dietician will ensure you are getting adequate nutrition during treatment. If you have any special dietary needs, let your healthcare team know right away. If you are unable to take regular meals through your mouth, your nutritionist will work with your doctor to help you receive adequate nutrition through other means.



Key Questions to Ask Your Doctor

After hearing a diagnosis of breast cancer, it may be hard to think of everything you want to ask your doctor. It can help to make a list of questions before your appointment. To help remember what the doctor says, you may want to take notes or bring along a family member or friend.

Diagnosis

- What is the stage of my cancer (how far developed is it)?
- Has the cancer spread beyond its original site?
- Do I need additional tests to check if the cancer has spread to other areas?

Treatment

- What kind of surgery would be best for me?
- What kind of lymph node removal would be best for me?
- Will I need radiation? To what area of the body and for how long?
- What type or combination of chemotherapy would be best for me?
- How will I get the chemotherapy and how often?
- Is hormone therapy right for me? If so, what kind and for how long?
- Is immune therapy right for me? If so, what kind and for how long?
- Is there any other type of treatment I should consider?
- What can I do to reduce the side effects before, during and after my treatments?
- How will I know if the treatment is working for me?
- What side effects should I report immediately?
- How long will treatment take?
- How will I know if treatment is successful?
- Are there any reconstructive options for me?

Treatment Options

Many women with breast cancer want to take an active role in making decisions about their medical care. It is natural to want to learn all you can about your disease and treatment options. Because of the complexity of cancer, more than one type of treatment may be required to control or cure your cancer.

Surgery – A surgeon will remove the cancerous tumor as well as margins around the tumor to try to remove microscopic stray cancer cells.

Chemotherapy – Medical oncologists will prescribe one or more courses of drugs that alone or in different combinations may kill cancer cells.

Hormone Therapy – Medical oncologists prescribe a course of special hormone suppressor agents that stop your own natural hormones. This is done when it is determined that your cancer is susceptible to growth from your natural hormones (estrogen-receptive breast cancer).

Radiation Therapy – Radiation oncologists prescribe precise amounts of high energy x-rays to be delivered to the cancerous tumor and surrounding area to try to kill microscopic stray cancer cells.

Vaccine or Biological Modifier Therapy – Researchers today are trying to find ways to trigger the body's own defense system to cure itself of cancer. These therapies are in clinical trial in many locations, but are not yet the standard in cancer care.

Understanding Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy is a medication used to treat cancer. The four main goals of chemotherapy are: to cure cancer, to keep cancer from spreading, to slow the growth of cancer and to relieve cancer symptoms. Chemotherapy helps destroy cancer cells by stopping them from growing and multiplying. It may be used along with radiation therapy, surgery or both. More than one chemotherapy drug may be given at a time because some drugs work better together than alone. Your doctor will recommend the medications and dosage schedule appropriate for you. The decision depends on the kind of cancer you have, whether or not it has spread (metastasized) from its original site, the extent of its growth and your general health.



How Chemotherapy Is Given?

Chemotherapy can be given in different ways. Some common methods include intravenous, oral, intramuscular and intrathecal. The intravenous route (IV) is a very common way to put medicine directly into a vein. A small needle is inserted into one of the veins in the arm. The chemotherapy flows through the needle and plastic tube (catheter) into the bloodstream. Sometimes a syringe is used to “push” the chemotherapy through the tubing. This is called an IV push medication. When you receive chemotherapy through an IV, it is very important to tell your nurse right away if there is any redness, burning or discomfort in the IV area.

A more permanent type of catheter may be recommended to avoid repeated painful needle sticks into the vein. These permanent catheters are called central venous catheters or implanted ports. Central venous catheters are surgically inserted into one of the large central veins in the chest and stay in place until the therapy is completed. Chemotherapy, blood and IV fluids can be given through this catheter, and blood for lab tests can be drawn from this site. (The tube will be capped and covered by a dressing, and your nurse will teach you how to care for the catheter to avoid infection.) An implanted port is round in shape and usually surgically inserted under the skin surface on the chest wall between the neck and shoulder. To use the port, the nurse will insert a needle through the top skin surface to access the port. Home care is usually required only at initial insertion.

Other chemotherapy delivery methods include:

- Oral: capsules.
- Intramuscular: an injection into the muscle.
- Intrathecal: certain types of cancer have a tendency to spread to the central nervous system. To prevent this, doctors may inject a chemotherapy medication into the spinal fluid through a spinal tap.

Treatment Length and Frequency

You may be treated in your doctor's office, in an outpatient clinic in the hospital, take pills on a specific schedule or receive drugs via an implanted pump at home. Your dosage schedule may last from a few weeks to a year, with varying cycle frequency (once a week, once a month or other intervals).

Take reading materials and/or a radio/cassette/CD player (and headphones) to help pass the time while you are receiving treatment at the doctor's office or in the infusion center at the hospital. Treatments are followed by rest cycles to give your body time to build healthy new cells and regain strength. Your doctor may provide a list of instructions for care between chemotherapy cycles. Follow them carefully and stay focused on having a good outcome from treatment.

Common Questions

Will I become nauseated from chemotherapy?

Some, but not all, chemotherapy agents may cause nausea and vomiting if you do not take any preventive measures. Your healthcare team knows which agents are likely to cause nausea and vomiting, and you may be prescribed additional anti-nausea medications to take before, during or after a chemotherapy treatment to help minimize this side effect.

Will I lose my hair with chemotherapy?

Some chemotherapy medications may cause loss of hair while you are taking them. The hair loss is not only on your head, but also in other areas of your body. Your hair will grow back after treatment. Your doctor knows which medications are likely to cause hair loss.

Why do I have to take chemotherapy over multiple courses?

Chemotherapy is usually delivered systemically, so that both your healthy and cancerous tissues are exposed to the drug. Chemotherapy can be used this way because cancer cells are more vulnerable to treatment than healthy cells. However, your body's healthy tissues need time to recover their strength. Typically, you will receive an initial course of treatment, which will let the doctor know if the agent is effective against your cancer, and then you will receive additional courses as necessary, depending on your overall health.



Understanding Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy is the use of high-energy X-rays for the treatment of cancer. Radiation can be an effective treatment for many cancers and is designed to work by preventing cancer cells from growing and multiplying. Radiation damages the tumor cells and can help prevent them from dividing. The goal is to slow or stop the growth of the tumor. In many cases the tumor may be completely destroyed.

First Visit/ Consultation

During this time the radiation oncologist will discuss your cancer and treatment options that are available to you. The doctor will discuss length of treatment, side effects and further tests needed. This is the time for you to ask questions. If possible, bring a family member with you to this consultation.

Simulation

Simulation is the first part of the treatment planning process. The radiation oncologist uses X-ray equipment (called a simulator) to aid in planning your treatment. Sometimes a non-toxic dye will be given to you to outline certain internal organs. Before the simulation, the radiation therapist may place you into a special positioning device to help you hold your body still during treatment.

Planning Marks

Planning marks allow treatment to be given to precisely the same spot each time. You will be given either small black permanent marking on your skin (about the size of a freckle) or similarly sized semi-permanent markings. These marks will create a focus for the treatment machine. You will be able to bathe or shower normally and not be concerned about accidentally washing them off.

Receiving Treatments

The machine used to treat your illness is designed to provide therapeutic doses of radiation. In some cases, internal shielding in the treatment machine will be customized to shield normal tissue and allow us to focus the radiation more precisely on the tumor areas. During treatment, you will lie on a table and it will raise you under the treatment machine. The therapist will align your body to ensure proper administration of therapy. Patients differ in the number of angles and sites for treatment. Your therapist will monitor your treatment from outside the room with closed circuit television and an intercom. If a linear accelerator is used, it will create a buzzing sound that you will be able to hear while the radiation is delivered. It is extremely important that you do not move during your treatment.

You will be assessed weekly while receiving treatment to see how your body is responding to therapy. The nurse can answer any questions you may have at this time. Follow all home care instructions carefully and report any unusual symptoms to your healthcare team.

Treatment Duration

Conventional radiation treatment for breast cancer is five days per week, Monday through Friday, with 30-34 treatments over six to seven weeks. Conventional treatment includes the whole breast and sometimes the lymph nodes under the arm and behind the collar bone, if the lymph nodes were involved with the cancer. Each daily treatment should last about 10-15 minutes. There are some very specialized treatment schedules for select patients with very early stage breast cancer. These may include treating just the part of the breast where the cancer was located and typically will be ten treatments in five days, given twice a day, morning and afternoon. This treatment is called accelerated partial breast radiation therapy. Not every patient is eligible for this treatment due to their cancer stage and it may be considered "experimental" by some insurance companies.

Follow-up Care

It is extremely important to schedule regular exams after your treatment is completed to check the continuing effect of your treatment. This may include blood work and X-rays. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is also part of following through after your radiation therapy is complete.

Common Questions

What is radiation therapy?

It is the use of high energy X-rays to treat diseases. These are therapeutic X-rays that are different from diagnostic X-rays (i.e., chest X-ray).

What are the radiation treatments like?

You will be asked to lie on a treatment table in a certain position and hold very still. The treatment machine will move to a pre-determined position and you will not feel or see the radiation.

Who will give me my treatments?

The treatments are planned by your radiation oncologist and the medical physicist, and administered by the radiation therapists.

What side effects can I expect?

You can anticipate feeling tired and getting a mild skin reaction during radiation therapy. These symptoms usually appear during the third week of treatment and last until your treatment has been over 2-3 weeks. Depending on the site that is being treated, you could experience the other side effects as well. Your doctor/nurse will inform you of all expected side effects.

Understanding Breast Reconstruction Options

The latest data suggest that nearly 70% of women get NO form of breast reconstruction after mastectomy. Sometimes this is the woman's choice, other times it is due to severe disease, but many times it is because women are not getting adequate information and education about their options for breast reconstruction.

After surgical removal of breast cancer, many women inquire about or desire reconstruction of the breast. There are many factors that need to be considered including the patient's personal preference, pathologic stage of the breast cancer and planned treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation. A plastic surgeon with expertise in breast reconstruction can help educate you about your specific options.

Breast Reconstruction...What are the Best Options for You

Breast reconstruction can ultimately help women regain their confidence and feminine form. Breast cancer presents women with dual challenges: not only must they battle a life-threatening illness, but survivors can be left feeling permanently scarred by life-saving surgeries employed to combat their breast cancer. Other women have not been affected by cancer, but find themselves at high risk of developing breast cancer in the future due to genetic predispositions and are proactively seeing breast reconstructive options. Our reconstructive surgeons are experienced in the most advanced breast reconstruction techniques, whether you're considering immediate or delayed breast reconstruction, autologous tissue breast reconstruction or implant based breast reconstruction.

AUTOLOGOUS TISSUE BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

Autologous tissue breast reconstruction allows the surgeon to use your own fat, skin and muscle to rebuild your breast. With autologous tissue breast reconstruction, surgeons can re-form breasts that look and feel more natural, without the need for artificial implants, over the course of several stages. Our surgeons are among only a handful of plastic surgeons in the United States who perform the most advanced breast reconstruction techniques, including perforator based microsurgical techniques that can help speed recovery and limit weakness at the donor sites by sparing the underlying muscles. Sky Ridge Medical Center partners with these reconstructive surgeons to offer the most advanced techniques in autologous breast reconstruction including, but not limited to:

DIAP (Deep Inferior Epigastric Perforator) Flap: surgeons use fat and skin from the patient's abdomen to create new breasts in the initial stage of this breast reconstruction.

SGAP (Superior Gluteal Artery Perforator) Flap: surgeons use fat and skin from the patient's buttox to create new breasts in the initial stage of this breast reconstruction.

TUG (Transverse Upper Gracilis) Flap: surgeons use fat and skin from the patient's inner thigh to create new breasts in the initial stage of this breast reconstruction.

TRAM (Transverse Rectus Abdominus Myocutaneous) Flap: surgeons use fat, skin and underlying muscle from the patient's abdomen to create new breasts in the initial stage of this breast reconstruction.

MUSCLE-SPARING FREE TRAM (Transverse Rectus Abdominus Myocutaneous) Flap: surgeons use fat, skin and underlying muscle from the patient's abdomen to create new breasts in the initial stage of this breast reconstruction.

LATISSIMUS (Latissimus Muscle) Flap: surgeons use fat, skin and underlying muscle from the patient's back to create new breasts in the initial stage of this breast reconstruction.

IMPLANT-BASED BREAST RECONSTRUCTION

Many women considering breast reconstruction elect to use implants to help re-form their breasts. Implant and tissue expander methods of breast reconstruction are ideal for those women who do not have enough of their own tissue to use for reconstructing the breast or those who simply desire an implant-based reconstruction. With these techniques, there are no other donor sites from which tissue is removed. By using tissue expanders to create a pocket for a permanent implant, our reconstructive surgeons can help women regain their feminine form.

Sky Ridge Medical Center partners with reconstructive surgeons to provide high quality comprehensive care that our breast patients deserve. They are well versed in the most advanced surgical techniques, and can help you decide what type of breast reconstruction might be right for you.

For more information, please visit our website at www.skyridgemedcenter.com or call at our Breast Health Navigator at 720-225-CARE (2273).



Preparing for Surgery

We recommend a pre-operative visit before surgery, where we will help you complete the necessary forms, conduct tests and schedule a visit with a pre-operative nurse to ensure your body is healthy enough for surgery. This pre-operative visit is a good time to let us know if you have any special needs, such as dietary restrictions and allergies. Please bring a list of medications with you as well. This is the time you might want to ask questions such as:

- What should I bring to the hospital?
- When will my family be able to visit me?
- Where will my family wait for me?
- Can a family member spend the night with me while I am here?
- Should I bring my own prescription medications with me?

We recommend that you bring the following items with you to the hospital

BRING TO THE HOSPITAL

Glasses/case
 Medication and allergy list
 Reading materials/DVDs
 Comfortable robe and slippers
 Appropriate loose clothing for going home
 Personal hygiene items
 Dental/partial container
 Important phone contacts
 Insurance card
 Paperwork including your will and/or advance directive

LEAVE AT HOME

Contact lenses
 Valuables (watches, jewelry, cash)

Helping You Manage Your Scar

Why does it matter if I have a scar?

Usually after breast cancer surgery for lumpectomy or mastectomy, the wound closes by forming scar tissue. This is the normal way the body heals any cut, but it can be problematic when the scar is tight and pulls the surrounding skin and tissues. Scar tissue is characterized by fibrous tissue, which is stiff like string instead of elastic like a rubber band or normal skin tissue. There is a healing ridge in the scar that is not the previous mass. Your physician will know the difference.

How does radiation therapy influence the scar?

While radiation therapy kills the cancer cells, it may tend to make the nearby healthy tissue develop inflammation and subsequent tightening and adhesions. Sometimes the scar will even thicken or pucker as it adheres to the surrounding tissues.

Why is the scar length and shape important?

During the early healing time while the scar is still pink, you can influence its length and shape. Once the scar sets, it turns white and you will not be able to change its length or shape. This is your “seize the moment” opportunity. If the scar sets too short, it will pull too tightly to allow normal range of motion of the joint where it is near. The shoulder joint range of motion, for example, will not be enough for you to raise your arm up overhead if the scar in the armpit is too short when it sets. It is important to take action early after surgery.

What can I do to help with the process?

Range of motion and stretching exercises post-op are important ways to ensure the scar is stretched. Scar massage, where you apply pressure to the scar and mobilize its tissue to prevent it from sticking to neighboring tissue is also helpful. We know from studies of burns that scar tissue responds to pressure by organizing the matrix of healing cells with the outcome of a more compact scar. You need to touch and massage your scar.

Who can I call for help?

Physical therapists at Sky Ridge Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation are trained to help you if you need assistance with these or other issues following breast cancer surgery. For more information, call us at 720-225-1030.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

It is important for women with breast cancer to take care of themselves, this includes eating well and staying as active as you can. You will need the right amount of calories to maintain a good weight. You also need enough protein to keep up your strength. Eating well may help you feel better and provide you with more energy.

Sometimes, particularly during or soon after treatment, you may not feel like eating. You may be uncomfortable or tired. And, you may not find that certain foods taste as good as they used to. In addition, the side effects of treatment (such as poor appetite, nausea, vomiting or mouth sores) can make it hard to eat as well. Your doctor, dietician or other healthcare provider can suggest ways to deal with these problems.

Many women find that they feel better when they stay active. Walking, yoga, swimming or other activities can keep you strong and increase your energy. Exercise may reduce nausea and pain and make treatment easier to handle. It can also help relieve stress.

Whatever physical activity you choose, be sure to talk to your doctor before you begin. If your activity causes you pain or other problems, be sure to let your doctor know right away.

Treatment Effects on Nutrition

Loss of appetite

Adequate nutrition is sometimes difficult when you are experiencing some of the side effects of cancer treatment. Loss of appetite is one common side effect. Try eating five to six small, high calorie and/or high protein meals a day. You may want to consider a commercial nutrition drink to supplement your diet. If the loss of appetite is severe, there are medications called appetite stimulants that your doctor may prescribe.

Feeling Full

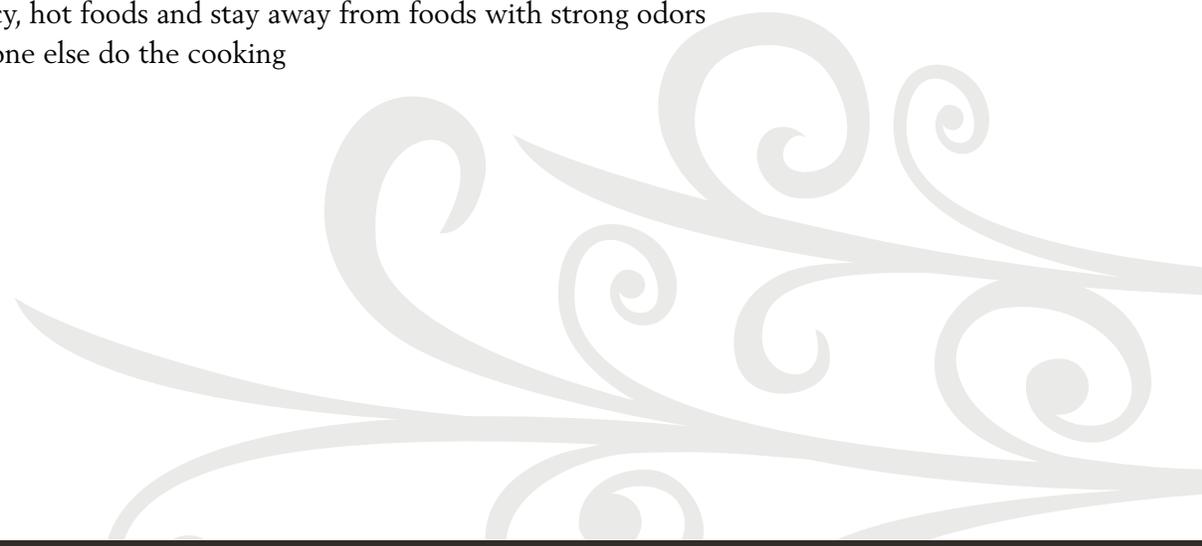
You may also have a feeling of fullness. Once again, eat five to six small, but nutrient-dense, meals a day. Do not fill up on low calorie foods like broth, lettuce and diet soda. Water is good for you, but it has no calories or protein and may cause a feeling of fullness. Choose fluids with calories (sugared soda, juice, milk and shakes). Drink between meals rather than with your meals to leave room for food.

Sore Throat and Mouth (Mouth Sores)

Sore throat and sore or dry mouth are some other common side effects. Eat foods that are cool or at room temperature. Try soft foods like milkshakes, yogurt, cottage cheese, custards and puddings or you may need to blend some of your foods to a baby food consistency. If you experience trouble swallowing, keep your foods moist with sauces, gravies, and butter. To keep your mouth wet with frequent fluids try ice chips. Ask your health care provider about medications and salves available to help relieve these side effects.

Nausea/Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting are other potential side effects of treatment. They may prevent you from eating enough and can eventually result in weight loss. Your physician will prescribe medications to help control your nausea. Take them as ordered and notify your doctor if they aren't working. Other methods to lessen these side effects are:

- Snack on toast, crackers, pretzels
 - Eat soft and bland foods like yogurt, sherbet, angel food cake, oatmeal, skinned chicken, and bland fruits and vegetables
 - Try icy liquids such as Popsicles® and ice chips
 - Avoid fried, greasy and fatty foods
 - Eat small amounts slowly and rest after meals
 - Avoid spicy, hot foods and stay away from foods with strong odors
 - Let someone else do the cooking
- 

Managing Cancer-Related Pain

Pain is whatever a person experiencing it describes it to be. The goal of pain management is to give you maximum pain relief with minimal side effects. The key to effective pain control is to treat the pain before it becomes severe. When your pain is controlled, you are better able to sleep and eat, are less fatigued and will have greater peace of mind.

What is Cancer-Related Pain?

Pain related to cancer may come from a tumor pressing on bone, nerves or body organs. It can also be caused by the treatments for cancer. Your cancer-related pain may be controlled with a 24-hour/day schedule of medicine. You may occasionally have “breakthrough pain” (when your pain is not in control). Your doctor may prescribe a different, single dose medication to take if breakthrough pain occurs.

Describing Your Pain

It is important to describe your pain carefully to your doctor, so that appropriate medicines may be prescribed for you. It may be useful to track your pain with a personal log or journal so you can easily provide helpful information. Some words you might use to describe the pain are “aching,” “tingling,” “sharp,” or “throbbing.” Be sure to describe the duration of your pain. Does it come and go or is it constant? What makes your pain better or worse? Where exactly does it hurt? We recommend using a scale of 1-10 to describe your pain: 1 is no pain and 10 is the worst pain imaginable. This will help your doctor understand clearly when you are starting to feel pain relief.

Ways to Control Pain

There are a number of ways to reduce and control pain. They may involve a combination of medication and non-medication approaches. Those without medication include:

- Skin and muscle stimulation: massage, acupuncture, hot/cold packs, vibration
- Imagery exercises: calling to mind pleasant and relaxing images to soothe yourself
- Relaxation exercises: meditation, yoga, focused contraction/release of muscles
- Distractions: reading, music, humor, talking to friends

Pain Medication

Many medicines are used to treat pain. You may be given one or more medications, depending on the type, location and severity of your pain. Take your medications as prescribed and always check with your doctor before taking any new pain relievers or changing dosages of currently prescribed medications. Do not worry that you will become addicted to pain medicine. You are taking the pain medication for a reason—you have pain! Cancer patients don’t usually develop addiction to pain medications and should be able to stop taking this medication when their pain diminishes.

Delivery of Pain Medication

You may receive pain medication in the following ways:

- Orally: pills
- By Patch: medication is embedded in a patch and applied to your skin; it is changed every 2-3 days.
- By Injection: medicine is delivered through a needle into your skin, your muscle or sometimes directly into your spine (an epidural).
- Intravenously: a needle is placed into your vein and remains there. This may be connected to “Patient- controlled Analgesia” or PCA. PCA allows you to give yourself pain medication as needed in pre-selected doses as prescribed by your doctor.

Side Effects

There may be side effects from pain medicine. Notify your doctor about any side effects you experience to see whether changing your dosage or medication will make you more comfortable. Common side effects from pain medication include: constipation, nausea, drowsiness, slowed breathing, itching, confusion and dry mouth.

What is Lymphedema?

Lymphedema is the result of an obstruction of the venous or lymphatic systems. It can cause chronic swelling in the arms, legs, chest or back due to accumulation of protein rich fluid in the lymph channels. Patients who have undergone treatment for cancer may experience damage to their lymph nodes. This can interfere with the natural healing process of the body, increasing the risk of infection. Left untreated, lymphedema can lead to limited mobility, decreased strength and decreased range of motion.



Who Can Benefit from a Lymphedema Program?

Patients who can benefit from our Lymphedema Management Program include:

- Post-mastectomy patients
- Breast cancer patients
- Patients with lymph node complications
- Hodgkin's disease patients
- Surgical patients with lower extremity lymph node complications

Helping our patients at every stage of their cancer recovery journey is important to us. At Sky Ridge, our lymphedema program includes preventative service for post surgical and post radiology patients who are at high risk of developing lymphedema. We use a number of treatment methods to help reduce swelling, along with other symptoms of lymphedema. Our goal is to help you maintain your quality of life and return to your normal routine. Our specialist, Christianne Hippe, helps patients manage lymphedema through:

- Exercise and self-care instruction
- Manual lymph drainage techniques
- Manual therapy techniques for scar tissue
- Bandaging and appropriate garment selection
- Education

These techniques will help reduce swelling, enable you to return to your hobbies, improve comfort and prevent infection through education.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 720-225-1030.

Cancer Resource Center



Sky Ridge has partnered with the American Cancer Society to provide a Cancer Resource Center for survivors, family members and friends. The Sky Ridge Cancer Resource Center is located in the Aspen Building, which is adjacent to the hospital.

Services include:

- Access to the latest information about tests, treatments and clinical trials
- Information about local community support resources
- Wig fittings
- Appointments for mastectomy bra fittings

Our Cancer Resource Center is open from **10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday**. Please come by for a visit and to let our trained volunteers assist you in learning more and accessing community resources. For more information, please call 720-225-4203.

Cancer Exercise Program at Sky Ridge

As part of our comprehensive cancer care philosophy, our Cancer Exercise Program provides a unique opportunity for patients to participate in an individualized exercise program. The goal is to **improve your quality of life** by reducing fatigue and boosting your immune system during and after cancer treatment.

How the Program Works

A clinical exercise specialist or physical therapist will work with you to develop an individualized program to fit your needs. This program does require your physician's approval, and there is a fee for the program. Some insurance companies will cover the cost. For more information or to schedule your initial consultation, please call us at **720-225-1030**.

Support Groups

Sky Ridge also offers support groups to provide you and your caregivers with emotional connection and resources. Please visit our website for details.



The Breast Health Navigator Program

Our goal is to provide our patients with the education, support and coordination to help them maneuver most effectively through their care after hearing a diagnosis of breast cancer. Our breast health navigator will:

- **Coordinate services throughout the continuum of breast care.**
- **Supply educational resources on breast health, breast cancer and breast care.**
- **Help patients make informed decisions about their breast care plan.**
- **Promote communication between patients and their health care providers.**

Breast Navigation Amenities

Our breast navigator is your advocate, helping reinforce and support the physician/patient relationship. Our goal is to enhance your quality of life, provide a sense of autonomy and help you manage your own health. We are here to help:

- **Assure patients have the educational resources & support services they need to receive quality care.**
- **Help provide uninterrupted and timely care.**
- **Inform patients and families about procedures and treatment plans.**
- **Expedite follow-up appointments.**
- **Connect patients and families to resources and support services**

Christina M. Merritt, RT (R)(M), CBPN-IC attended the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs in 2002 where she studied Sports Health and Wellness with an emphasis in leadership studies. She earned her certificate in Radiology and Mammography from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2007 and 2008. Christina came to Sky Ridge Medical Center in 2010 after working with multiple HCA facilities in Las Vegas as a mammographer, focusing on patient navigation, diagnostic studies and invasive breast procedures. She recently completed her certification at the National Consortium of Breast Centers where she received her CBPN-IC. She is currently the Breast Health Navigator at Sky Ridge Medical Center.

Christina has been integral in developing the navigation department at Sky Ridge. Her commitment to her patients transcends to the community, where she is actively involved in providing support to single parent families, participating on Relay for Life committees and bringing breast cancer awareness to college campuses.

Who Can Benefit

- Newly diagnosed breast cancer patients
- Current breast cancer patients who have questions about their care plan
- Loved ones and support team

For more information please call, Christina Merritt, Breast Health Navigator, RT(R)(M), CBPN-IC at 720-225-2273 or Gloria Medina, Oncology Nurse Manager, RN, BSN, MHA at 720-225-5265.

Massage Therapy

Beneficial Healing Massage during All Stages of Oncology Treatment

Current medical research published by the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami confirms that massage therapy offers benefits to cancer patients at nearly every stage of treatment and recovery.

Sky Ridge Medical Center has contracted with Medicine Hands of Colorado to offer this complimentary service to current radiation therapy patients at our Cancer Center. Medicine Hands of Colorado is a leader in delivering compassionate, nurturing and skilled touch for patients going through this experience.

Massage Therapy

Our patients receive a comprehensive, individualized care plan created in partnership with their healthcare team. This care plan is then integrated with all aspects of the patient's healing journey.

Massage often empowers patients by helping them feel whole again, less traumatized by surgery or other invasive procedures and more in touch with their recuperative resources. A comforting, nurturing touch, in itself, is potential medicine.

Our Certified Oncology Massage Therapists

Medicine Hands of Colorado's certified massage therapists have been specially trained in oncology massage. This comprehensive program in skilled touch therapies assures patients and their families that we understand the range of medical implications.

Benefits of Massage

We invite you to experience the powerful benefits of massage therapy. We offer **complimentary sessions for our current radiation therapy patients every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.** Please call us at 720-225-4200 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

- Decreases symptoms related to chemotherapy and radiation such as fatigue, nausea, diarrhea and loss of appetite
- Increases the effectiveness of other treatments such as pain medication, physical therapy or a medical procedure
- Increases circulation
- Provides pain relief
- Decreases anxiety and depression
- Increases circulation
- Increases range of motion
- Relieves muscle soreness
- Decreases edema
- Increases alertness and mental clarity
- Stimulates faster wound healing
- Sedates or stimulates the nervous system
- Encourages deeper respiration
- Improves bowel activity
- Increases the patient's awareness of stress signals





Sky Ridge Medical Center®

Beyond Your Expectations

10101 RidgeGate Parkway
Lone Tree, Colorado 80124

Phone: 720-225-1000

Find a Physician: 720-225-5DOC

www.skyridgemedcenter.com