



What Treatment Side Effects Do Prostate Cancer Patients Experience?

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Andrew Schorr:

Surgery is a significant decision and can have issues that come with it, as can radiation, so could you just talk about that for a minute?

Brenda Martone:

Yes, of course. Surgery, men can—after surgery, can have issues with incontinence, which is leakage of the urine. After surgery, there are exercises and things like that that can be helpful to recover some of the muscle strength, but you may not be back to baseline, and so, managing that, men may need to wear a pad.

There are other side effects, of course, in terms of sexual function, depending on—the surgeons try their best to do what they call nerve-sparing surgery, to allow, obviously, erections and that, but not all the time is that maintained or preserved after surgery. Men need to be aware that they could have some sexual dysfunction following surgery, and again, there are sexual health clinics and options there to help manage that side effect.

Andrew Schorr:

Okay, and radiation, what I hear from people, really, the radiation, is they just get tired.

Brenda Martone:

They do, they do get extremely tired, and it's a progressive thing, the longer that they're on treatment, and it's sort of a funny thing, you can't see, smell, or feel radiation, but you become so fatigued. There are also the side effects of, depending on where the radiation beam is aimed, sometimes men can have irritation to the rectum, so there can be problems with diarrhea, and then, depending on how they're able to keep up with fluids and all that kind of stuff, sometimes men can suffer from a little dehydration. Nausea isn't so much of a big deal, but again, the fatigue can be very, very challenging.

Andrew Schorr:

Okay, is there anything you can do to help?

Brenda Martone:

Oh, yes, absolutely. Oftentimes, we focus on hydration, we focus on encouraging men, even when they're feeling so tired, to get up off that couch. It doesn't have to be a jog, but just walk around the block, walk around their house, stay active. Exercise is s really good—or just physical activity is a really good problem solving or a really good intervention to help minimize some of that fatigue, and then, of course, looking for other things like making sure they're not becoming anemic and things like that, we could support them, making sure their diet, even though it's very restricted on radiation has foods that are high in protein and iron, and things like that.

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