

MANAGING RASH



OVERVIEW

A rash is any change that affects the appearance, texture, or sensation of the skin. It may be red, bumpy, and itchy or may cause cracks in the skin where infection can occur. Rash may involve changes in and around the nailbeds or on the surface of the skin, or loss of the nail itself.

Skin rashes may be a side effect of medication, including **chemotherapy** used to treat cancer. A new type of cancer treatment—**targeted therapy**—seems to cause troublesome skin changes. Your health care team will want you to call them about any skin reactions you experience. These changes typically appear in the first 2 weeks of receiving cancer treatment and may progress for several weeks before improving. Common sites of these rashes are the face and upper chest. CRC targeted therapies that can cause skin reactions include:

- Cetuximab (Erbitux)
- Panitumumab (Vectibix)



WHAT CAN HELP

- Wear loose-fitting cotton clothes
- Avoid direct sunlight if possible; if not, wear long sleeves and a hat
- Use sunscreens if direct sun is unavoidable
- Avoid long, hot showers. Bathe the skin several times each day with oatmeal or oil-based soaps
- Use mild cleansers, such as Aveeno, Neutrogena, Dove, and Ivory products
- Use over-the-counter oral or topical antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) as needed for itching



RESOURCES

CancerCare, http://www.cancercare.org/pdf/booklets/ccc_managing_rash.pdf

Cancer.net, "Skin Reactions to Targeted Therapies"

<http://www.cancer.net/patient/All+About+Cancer/Treating+Cancer/Managing+Side+Effects/Skin+Reactions+to+Targeted+Therapies>



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR TEAM

It's important to let your doctor or nurse know if you develop a rash that worsens each day or begins to crack, weep, or look infected. You may need to take antibiotics by mouth or apply special lotions. Keeping your health care team informed will help you keep the rash under control.

These materials are provided by the Advisory Panel from the Web site manageCRC.com, a discussion forum for healthcare professionals managing the care of patients with colorectal cancer. Patient resources and useful print out are available at <http://managecrc.com/Resources/>. The opinions and information presented do not necessarily reflect those of the site manager or its sponsor. We do not endorse any products or services described here and are not responsible for the accuracy of information offered on Internet links provided for the user's convenience. We assume no legal liability or responsibility for the information provided here or on the manageCRC.com Web site, which is presented for educational purposes only. A qualified health care provider should be consulted for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Updated 10/13/11