

Mölnlycke Sponsored Learning: Are Your Patients Dressed for Success?

Presenter: Rosemary Hill BSN CWO CN NSWOC WCCC(C)

"Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."
Anthem, Leonard Cohen

The Physical And Psychological Burden Of Radiation Dermatitis

Patients who live with breast cancer often experience physical and emotional hardships. These hardships can often be iatrogenic (i.e., caused by medical procedures). Patients who suffer from breast cancer often requires radiation therapy (RT) as part of their treatment plan. Prolonged exposure to radiation, like the sun for example, can lead to adverse skin reactions (i.e., a sunburn). Patients who undergo RT can develop inflammatory changes in their skin known as radiation dermatitis (RD). RD can present with an array of signs and symptoms, including redness/erythema, pigmentation, and dry and moist desquamation. It has been found that 95% of women who require RT experiences some degree of RD.¹ Patients with large breasts and those with post-mastectomy undergoing RT are at a greater risk of RD. Additionally, other risk factors include age, skin type, history of smoking, and radiation delivery methods.

The possibility of RD adds to the emotional burden for patients who are living with breast cancer. It has been found that psychological stress can exacerbate RD in patients receiving RT.² Therefore, it is imperative to find a solution to prevent RD or reduce the severity of RD.

Early Research In Radiation Dermatitis

Herst et al. performed a study³ with 80 breast cancer patients receiving RT. They compared patients who used aqueous creams with those who used Mepitel® Film on and near the treatment area. The study demonstrated that the Mepitel® Film prevented moist desquamation and reduced skin reaction severity by 92% when used



prophylactically. This was a pivotal study – the use of a film dressing became a standard of care in New Zealand for breast cancer patients receiving RT. In 2022, Behroozian et al. performed a similar study⁴ with 376 breast cancer patients receiving RT and concluded that Mepitel® Film significantly reduced symptoms of RD (i.e., blistering/peeling, erythema, pigmentation, and edema).

The Light In The Crack: Mepitel® Film

Mepitel® Film is designed to protect and preserve fragile and sensitive skin to minimize skin breakdown. It can adapt to irregular body contours. It essentially acts as a 'second skin' layer. Mepitel® Film has a proprietary silicone contact layer, known as Safetac®. This silicone



DERMATITIS RADIATION

Adapted NCI CTCAE (Version 4.03)

GRADE 1 (Mild)	GRADE 2 (Moderate)	GRADE 3 (Severe)	Grade 4 (Life-threatening)	Grade 5
Faint erythema or dry desquamation	Moderate to brisk erythema; patchy moist desquamation, mostly confined to skin folds and creases; moderate edema	Moist desquamation in areas other than skin folds and creases; bleeding induced by minor trauma or abrasion	Life-threatening consequences; skin necrosis or ulceration of full thickness dermis; spontaneous bleeding from involved site; skin graft indicated	Death

BC Cancer Agency. (2023). Symptoms Management Guidelines: Radiation Dermatitis.
<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/nursing-site/Documents/16.%20Radiation%20Dermatitis.pdf>

Application Tips and Precautions:

- Be sure to consult the radiation oncologist first
- Check and see if the patients have a silicone allergy
- Apply the Mepitel® Film dressing the day before starting RT
- Ensure the skin is clean and dry and free of deodorants, lotions, or creams prior to application
- Place the patient in the position of how they will be receiving RT
- Do not stretch the Mepitel® Film dressing; Gently lay it into place
- Minimize overlapping of the film dressing to 1cm or less
- Educate the patient that they can shower with the Mepitel® Film dressing
- Encourage the patient to avoid excessive/strenuous exercises
- Trim additional dressings and patch as needed (minimize overlap to 1cm or less)
- Remove the film dressing in the shower/bath
- Wash the area gently with a fragrance-free, pH-balanced soap

A video application guide created by Mölnlycke can be found by searching "**Mepitel® Film Application on Breast for Radiotherapy**" on YouTube.

A step-by-step application guide can be found at:
<https://www.molnlycke.ca/our-knowledge/mepitel-film---radiotherapy-breast-application/>

layer ensures the dressing can be removed easily without causing damage to the fragile and sensitive skin.

The Mepitel® Film has been found to prevent and reduce the severity of RD. It is a simple dressing to apply. It has been recommended by the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer (MASCC) as an intervention to prevent acute RD.⁵ Patients living with breast cancer often suffer physically, mentally, and emotionally. Perhaps the Mepitel® Film, a simple yet sophisticated dressing, can minimize or mitigate some of these sufferings. Like in Leonard Cohen's song *Anthem*, perhaps the Mepitel® Film, a simple yet sophisticated dressing, is the crack that lets the light of hope in.

Rosemary Hill BSN CWO CN NSWOC WOCC(C) has been a nurse for over 35 years and is the recipient of the Award of Excellence in Practice from the Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (ARNBC). She works at Lions Gate Hospital as a Nurse Specialized in Wound Ostomy and Continence (NSWOC). Her past volunteer activities include the role of President for Nurses Specialized in Wound Ostomy Continence Canada (2016-2018). As well, she participates as a member on the British Columbia provincial Skin and Wound committee, continues to Chair the Provincial Ostomy committee, and is an expert speaker at national and international events. Most recently volunteer activities have taken her to Argentina where she worked to provide wound education.

To access the full presentation click here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/15uPlz7zeBo_aJT7GeuUgc0vM-wC8H3KV/view?usp=share_link

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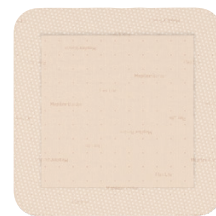
Mepilex® Border Flex Lite

Expanding the Mepilex® Border Flex range

New Mepilex® Border Flex Lite is a flexible all-in-one foam dressing suitable for non-to-low exuding wounds, as well as when a wound is located on a challenging contour.



SafetaC
TECHNOLOGY



15 x 15 cm



10 x 10 cm



7.5 x 7.5 cm



5 x 12.5 cm



4 x 5 cm

