Radiation Therapy – Cystitis and urethritis

Radiation therapy to the abdomen and pelvis may cause irritation and inflammation of the bladder and urethra. Bladder irritation is called radiation cystitis, and irritation of the urethra is called radiation urethritis. These two cause similar problems and are treated in similar ways.

Symptoms:

- You may feel the need to empty your bladder frequently, and may feel you cannot hold your urine as long as you have before, or cannot get your bladder to completely empty.
- Burning with urination.
- Pain with urination.
- Blood or mucus strands visible in the urine.

Recommendations:

- Drink plenty of fluids every day; at least two to three quarts during a 24-hour period, unless you are on a fluid restriction for medical reasons. You should drink enough fluid so your urine is almost colorless. The stronger the color of your urine, the more it will burn to urinate.
- Avoid food and fluid that can be irritating to the bladder:
  - Coffee and tea
  - Alcohol (beer, wine and hard liquor)
  - Tobacco
  - Spicy foods
- Cranberry juice has been proven to keep bacteria counts down and help prevent bladder infection.
- A prescription medication may be ordered if these other measures are not enough to improve the discomfort. It is important you take any prescription medicine as ordered.