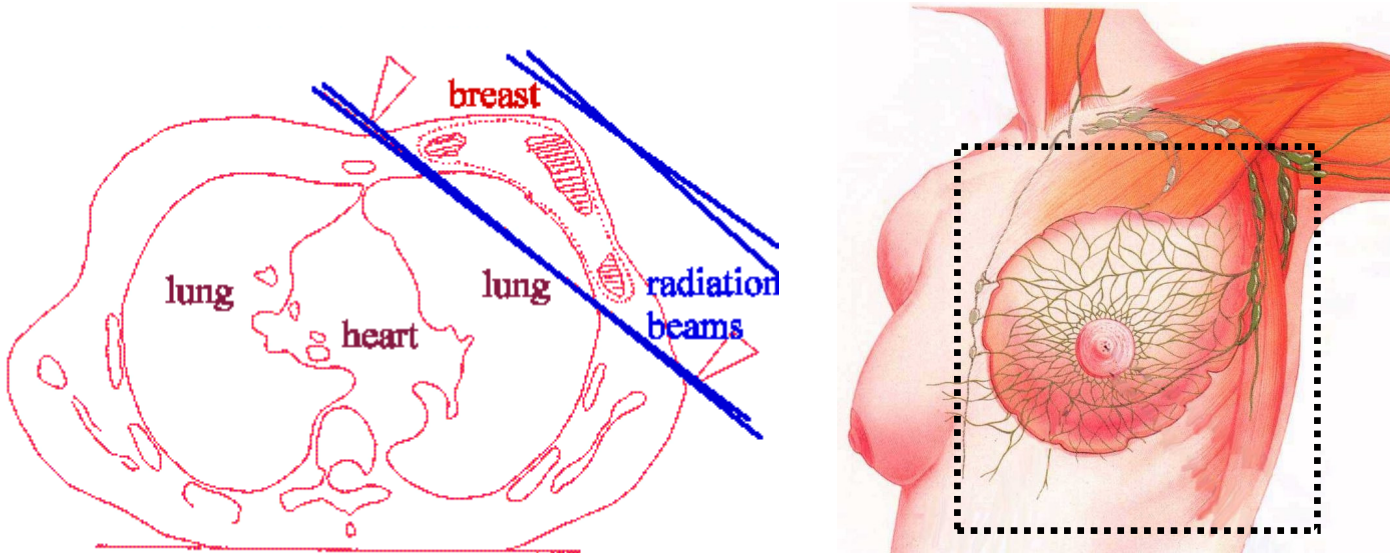


# Breast Cancer Information

## Side Effects of Breast Radiation



Generally the whole breast is treated side to side for 26 times and then a smaller area (around the lumpectomy scar) is given 6 or 7 more treatments (called a boost dose). Side effects vary by individual but commonly show up after about 10 – 12 treatments and then fade away about a week or two after completion. The most common are as noted:

1. a sun burn effects to the skin with some breast tenderness and swelling (Sween cream, Biafine, Aloe or cortisone creams can be helpful.)
2. The axilla (arm pit) can be sore or numb (depending on previous lymph node surgery.)
3. The risk of arm swelling (lymphedema) is small, but women who have had lymph node surgery should avoid trauma to that arm (blood draws, etc) and do gentle range of motion exercises
4. Fatigue is common, particularly in women who have had a lot of chemotherapy, the blood counts are normally not affected much by radiation but in women who have a lot of chemotherapy the counts may decline a bit and cause anemia
5. Hot flashes are common in women who have had to stop taking estrogen or in some women on Tamoxifen
6. The chest wall and ribs get radiation and some women have tender ribs, with a very small risk of fracture, that can show up months after treatment
7. A CT scan of the chest taken 6 – 12 months after radiation may show some scar tissue (fibrosis) in the lung but it is uncommon to have any effects of a patient's breathing

For more information go to: [www.wellspringoncology.org](http://www.wellspringoncology.org)