Almost all patients undergoing external beam radiation therapy are expected to develop acute skin reactions. Frequent nursing assessment and intervention, however, are required for all patients.

The incidence of radiodermatitis has decreased with megavoltage equipment, as Dini et al. (1993) noted, but even so, radiodermatitis continues to influence the therapeutic program and impair patients’ quality of life. Ratliff (1990) suggested that preventive interventions and early management could minimize the severity of the skin reaction. According to Sitton (1992), to prepare for these untoward skin reactions and attempt to minimize irradiation of the treated skin, patients typically are told to gently wash the irradiated skin with mild soap and pat it dry. They are cautioned to avoid trauma and sun exposure to the area. McGowan (1989) and Walker (1982) further recommended loose-fitting clothing made of nonirritating fabrics for daily wear.

Recommendations for skin products vary from among radiation department and physicians as determined by Barkham...