

Ask Your Doctor

Questions about radiation for cancer

Bone cancer: Can radiation help the pain?

Yes. If cancer has spread to your bones, radiation can help relieve your pain. You may only need one, or a few, treatments.

Early-stage non-small-cell lung cancer: Do I need radiation after surgery?

You probably don't need radiation if cancer hasn't spread to the lymph nodes in the center of your chest. But you may need it if the lung tumor was not completely removed.

Brain cancer: Do I need whole-brain radiation after stereotactic radiosurgery?

Probably not, if you have a small number of individual brain tumors. But you do need follow-up imaging. And you may need more treatments in the future.

Prostate cancer: Do I need radiation?

It depends on your age, your health, and the stage and type of prostate cancer. Many men do just as well with "watchful waiting."

Prostate cancer: Should I get proton beam therapy?

It's not clear. The best way for us to learn more is if patients take part in clinical trials.

Low-risk endometrial cancer: Do I need radiation therapy after a hysterectomy?

Probably not, if the risk of cancer returning is low. Talk to your doctor about your risks.

Breast cancer: If I have a lumpectomy, how long should radiation treatment last?

Whole-breast radiation after lumpectomy reduces the risk of cancer returning. Three-to-four weeks can work just as well as longer treatments for many patients.

Breast cancer: Is intensity-modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) a better treatment?

No, not for most women with breast cancer. But IMRT can be useful for some patients to help protect sensitive areas from radiation.

Breast cancer: After I finish radiation, when should I get a mammogram?

Wait six to 12 months after radiation, then get annual mammograms. You should get them more often if a physical exam or other test shows something suspicious.

Talk to your doctor

Radiation therapy can help treat cancer and the painful symptoms from tumors.

- Ask if you need radiation.
- Ask if there are other treatment options.
- Ask about palliative care. It can help you manage cancer symptoms, such as pain and nausea. It can also reduce stress and improve quality of life. It may even help you live longer.

