

The Comprehensive Cancer Center's Radiation Oncology Services at Rhode Island Hospital includes pioneering physicians, unique and sophisticated technology, and experienced staff. Ours is the only hospital-based radiation oncology program in the state.

Using an array of advanced technologies, the department of radiation oncology has a proven record of superior outcomes for patients who have been diagnosed with common and uncommon cancers of every anatomical site.

Our multidisciplinary team works together to provide integrated, streamlined care for every patient.

Team members include:

- Physicians
- Medical physicists
- Dosimetrists
- Radiation therapists
- Nurses
- Nutritionists
- Social workers

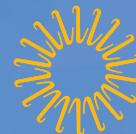
Our program works within the Comprehensive Cancer Center's multidisciplinary services to meet all of our patients' needs. We encourage patients to use free services such as patient navigation, clinical social work and complementary therapies.

As a critical member of your treatment team, it is important that you are informed and feel comfortable with your care plan. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. You can reach us at 401-444-8311.

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Comprehensive Cancer Center

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Radiation Therapy for Lung Cancer



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How is radiation therapy used for lung cancer?

Radiation therapy is a procedure that delivers high-energy x-rays that can destroy rapidly dividing cancer cells. Radiation is used as part of curative treatment of lung cancer. It can also be used to relieve shortness of breath by helping to open blocked airways or to help relieve pain.

Most often, radiation therapy for lung cancer is delivered by the external beam technique, which aims a beam of x-rays directly at the tumor. Treatment is given in a series of sessions, often over four to seven weeks. Radiation may be used alone or in combination with chemotherapy and/or surgery. It can help kill cancer cells that might have been left behind following surgery or help shrink a tumor to make it easier to take out with surgery.

Patients with stage IV lung cancer, cancer that has spread to other parts of the body, may have complications like bone pain or nervous system problems. Radiation may ease these symptoms.

What is external radiation therapy?

External radiation is radiation directed at the tumor from a source outside your body. It is the most common type of radiation used to treat lung cancer. Radiation is usually directed at the tumor with a machine called a linear accelerator. External treatments are given once a day for five consecutive days over the course of four to seven weeks. Each session takes only a few minutes and is painless.

What is stereotactic radiosurgery?

Stereotactic radiosurgery is another type of external radiation. It is a way to aim high levels of radiation at a tumor very precisely by targeting it from many different angles. This type of radiation is used most often in the lung for some very early stage cancers or for more advanced lung cancer that has spread to the brain.

What are common side effects of radiation treatment?

Radiation can affect normal cells as well as cancer cells. That means you may have side effects depending on the location and amount of radiation. Side effects that people with lung cancer may have include fatigue, skin changes, loss of appetite, sore throat and difficulty swallowing, coughing or shortness of breath.

Most of these side effects will go away or get better within a few days to weeks after your treatment ends. Patients should discuss any symptoms with their physician.

How can I prepare myself for treatment?

You may feel better during your radiation treatments if you make an extra effort to get plenty of rest and eat healthy meals that are easy to swallow. It is important to maintain your weight during treatments for lung cancer. A nutritionist is available to help you with any nutritional needs or questions.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center's complementary therapy program offers a variety of services to help during treatment, including Reiki, hypnosis, massage and acupuncture.

