



## A Note on Palliative Radiotherapy

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### Description

Radiotherapy works by damaging the DNA within cancer cells so they can no longer divide and grow (DNA is the genetic code that controls how the body's cells behave). Palliative radiotherapy is a safe, effective treatment modality for many symptoms of advanced cancer. It relieves bone pain, to relieve blockage in tumor, spinal cord compression, to treat symptoms of cancer in brain and lungs, to control an ulcerating cancer and reduce bleeding, to treat a blood vessel blockage in the chest.

Depending upon the type of cancer, and where it has spread to, you may get internal and external radiotherapy. External radiotherapy uses radiotherapy machines to aim radiation beams at a cancer outside the body. This destroys the cancer cells. There are different types of external radiotherapy, depends on your type of cancer and its position in the body. Internal radiotherapy gives radiation from inside the body.

There are two main types of internal radiotherapy:

1. Radioactive liquid treatment (radioisotope or radionuclide therapy): This scan helps to plan your treatment. The radioactive

liquid or tablet highlight the area that needs treatment and your doctor get to know how much radiation is required for the treatment.

2. Brachytherapy (radioactive implant treatment): this involves CT scan or ultrasound scan and this helps to know how much radiation you need and where to put the radioactive source or implants.

The type you have depends on your cancer type and where it is in your body. Internal radiotherapy delivers a high dose of radiation with fewer side effects than external radiotherapy. This is because internal radiotherapy delivers radiation from inside the body, close to the cancer, so affects fewer healthy cells. However, internal radiotherapy is only suitable for smaller cancers.

Palliative radiotherapy aims to make you feel better beside there are some side effects like feeling tired during the treatment and for a few days or weeks afterwards. Feeling sick if you have radiotherapy to the pelvic area, abdomen or brain. Soreness when you swallow after radiotherapy to the lung, the head and neck area, or the top of the spine. An increase in pain in the treatment area for a few days or weeks afterwards.

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