

# Radiation Therapy for Spinal Tumors



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Spinal tumors may originate from various sources, such as the spinal cord, nerve roots, or surrounding tissues, and can result from factors like genetic predisposition, metastatic spread from other cancers, or primary growths within the spine. Radiation therapy is one of the main treatment options for spinal tumors and it has several benefits for patients. It can be used to treat tumors that have spread to the spine from other areas (metastases) or tumors that have started within the spine itself.

### Advantages of Radiation Therapy

- » Radiation therapy is a non-invasive treatment option.
- » Radiation is a quick treatment with minimal or no pain and a short recovery time.
- » Radiation is a non-invasive outpatient treatment.
- » Radiation therapy will be targeted to a specific area of the body, which allows for precise treatment of the cancer while minimizing damage to healthy tissue.

### Effectiveness of Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy is effective in controlling the growth of spinal tumors and reducing tumor size, thereby alleviating pain, neurological deficits, and spinal cord compression. Radiation therapy can be used as a standalone treatment option or in combination with surgery or chemotherapy. When surgery is not feasible, radiation therapy plays a crucial role in preventing disease progression.

### Side Effects

Radiation therapy is an outpatient procedure with minor side effects that may include skin reactions, fatigue, painful swallowing, or nausea depending on the area treated.

These are manageable and resolve shortly after treatment is completed.

### Conclusion

Radiation therapy offers several advantages in the treatment of spinal tumors, providing a non-invasive, precisely targeted approach to tumor control and symptom management. Spinal tumor survivors should continue to receive regular follow-up care, including regular scans, to detect any potential recurrence of the disease.

## QUICK FACTS

**30-70%**  
of cancer patients  
develop metastatic  
disease to the spine

Most  
spine tumors are  
**metastatic**  
(spread from  
somewhere else)

Some spinal  
tumors are  
**benign and  
develop**  
from the tissues of  
the spine itself

Huntsville: 256.319.5400

Decatur: 256.355.0370

Florence: 256.760.1150