

Ask a Radiation Oncologist: Radiation Therapy for Brain/Spine Cancers

RT Answers **Facebook Live** Event: March 23, 6 pm ET/3 pm PT



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Format for Tonight

- Panelists will give overview & answer common questions.
- Submit written questions in the Facebook chat
- Recording will be available online




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Today's discussion is informational only and should not be used in place of advice specific to your condition from your medical professional.

We will discuss treatments including surgery, chemotherapy and others. We encourage you to talk to other specialists, where appropriate, about other treatments you are considering.

RTAnswers.org

SELECT A CANCER TYPE 

SEARCH RTANSWERS 

FIND A RADIATION ONCOLOGIST 

City

--- Choose A State --- 

--- Choose A Specialty --- 

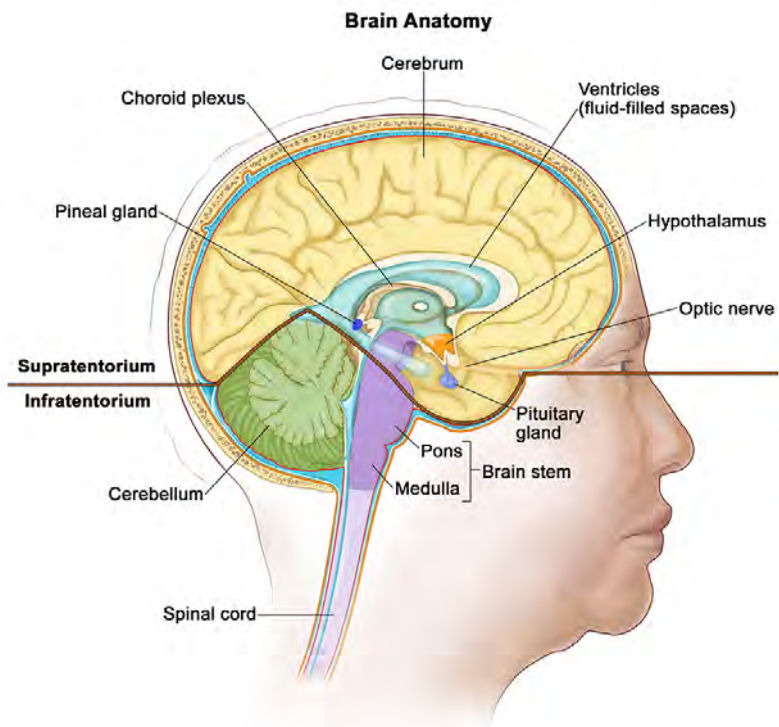
ADVANCED SEARCH

SEARCH

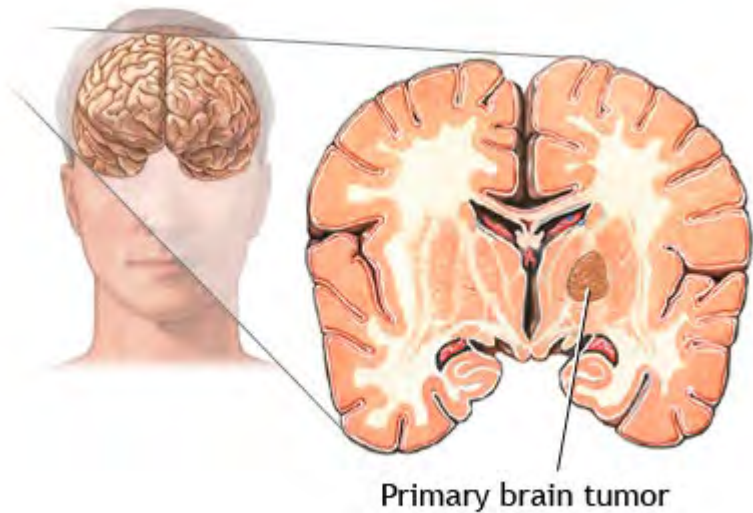


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Types of Brain & Spine Cancers



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Primary Brain Tumors

- A primary brain tumor is a tumor that starts in the brain
- A primary brain tumor is often described as "low grade" or "high grade"
- Low-grade tumors generally grow slowly, but can turn into high-grade tumors. A high-grade tumor is more likely to grow faster.


metastatic vs primary

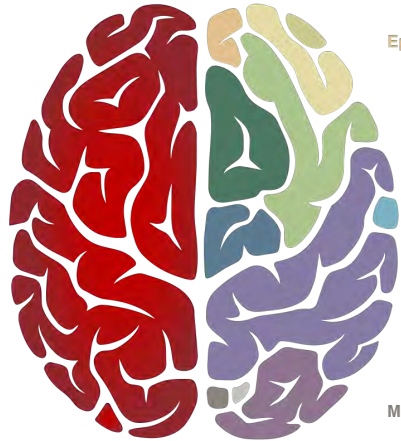
BRAIN CANCER

INCIDENCE

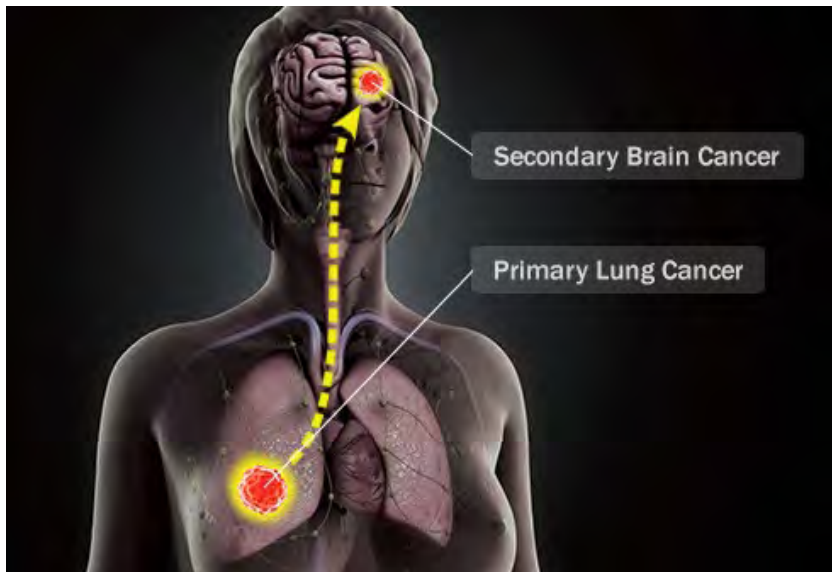
+ Higher than any primary brain cancer

50% Accounts for half of all CNS tumors

 Lung and breast cancer are the most frequent metastasis origin



Ependymomas
Astrocytomas
Lymphoma
Glioblastoma
All Other
Oligodendrogliomas
Pituitary
Meningioma
Nerve Sheath
Craniopharyngioma
Medulloblastoma



Brain Metastases

- A metastasis is a cancerous tumor that starts in another part of the body and then spreads to the brain
- A brain metastasis may also be called metastatic cancer or a “secondary” brain tumor
- Brain metastases are more common than primary brain cancers

metastatic vs primary

BRAIN CANCER

INCIDENCE



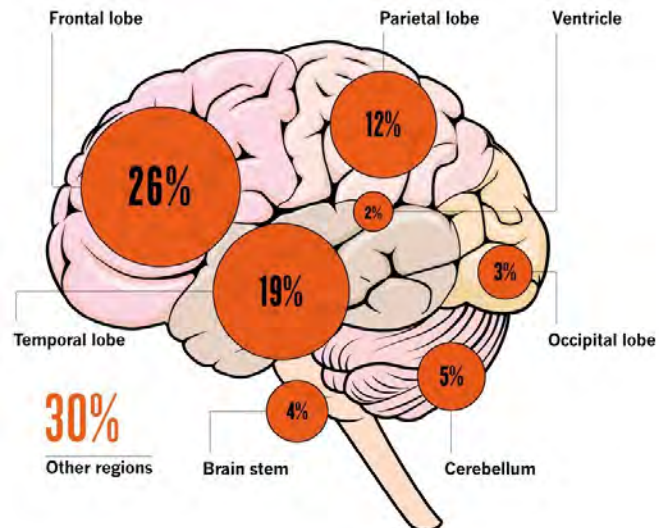
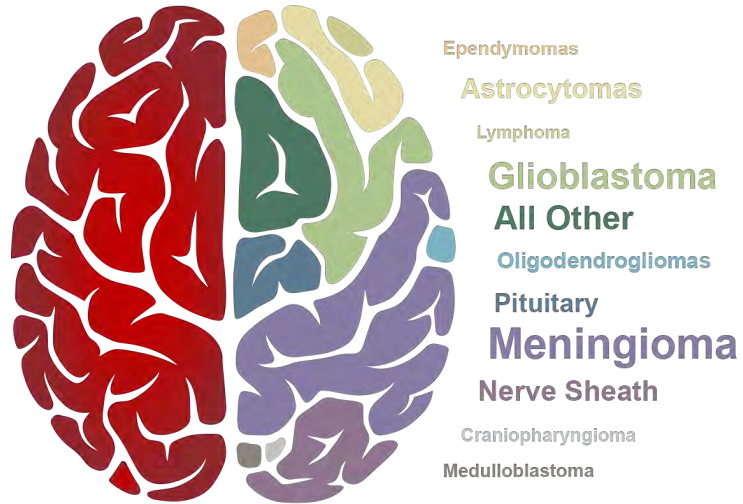
Higher than any primary brain cancer



Accounts for half of all CNS tumors



Lung and breast cancer are the most frequent metastasis origin



Brain Cancers

- What are the most common types of primary brain tumors?
- What are the most common types of brain metastases?



Cancers of the Spine & Spinal Cord

- Both primary and secondary cancers can arise within the spine
- The spine is a common site of metastatic disease for many types of cancers, including breast, lung, prostate, & colorectal cancers



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Treatment of Brain & Spine Tumors

Doctors & Treatments

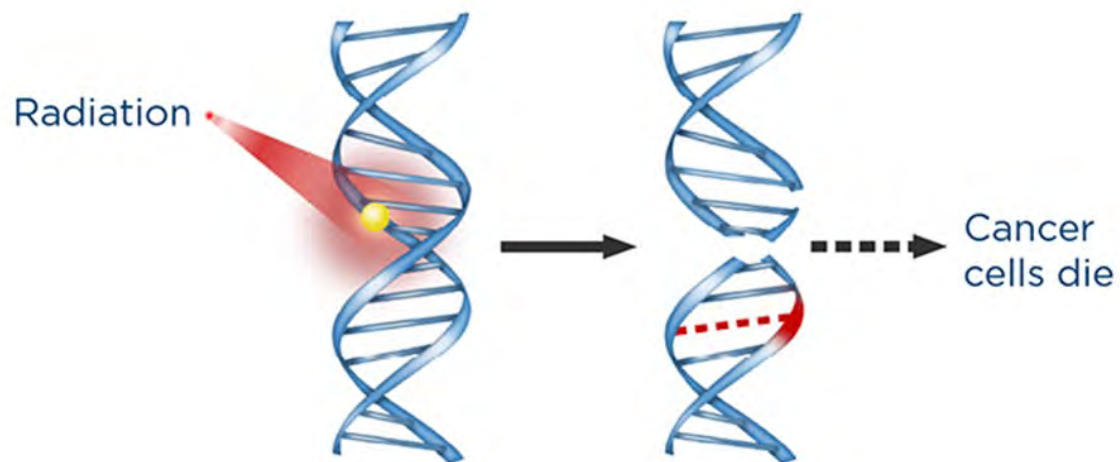


- Which doctors are involved with patients with brain cancer?
- Which types of treatments are offered by each physician?
- Do all brain and spine tumors require surgery?



Radiation Therapy

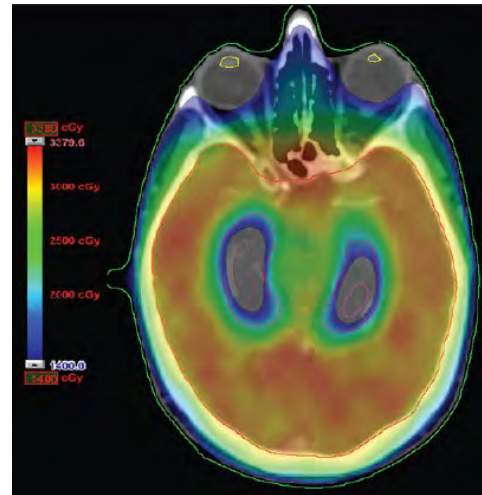
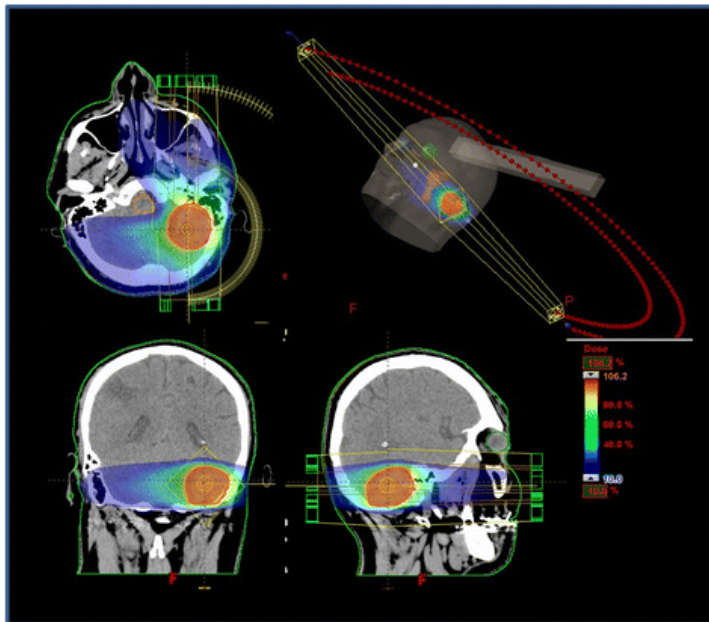
- How does radiation therapy work?
- What types of radiation treatment methods are available?





Radiation Therapy

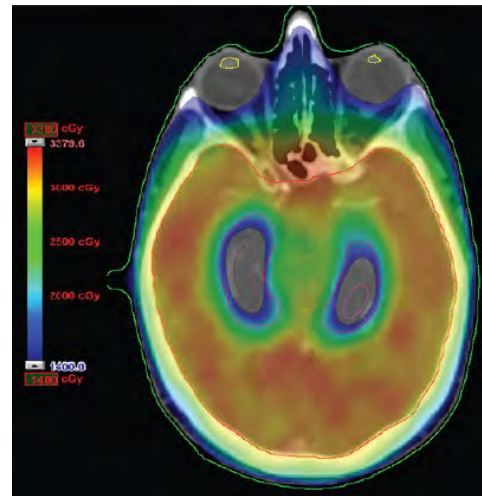
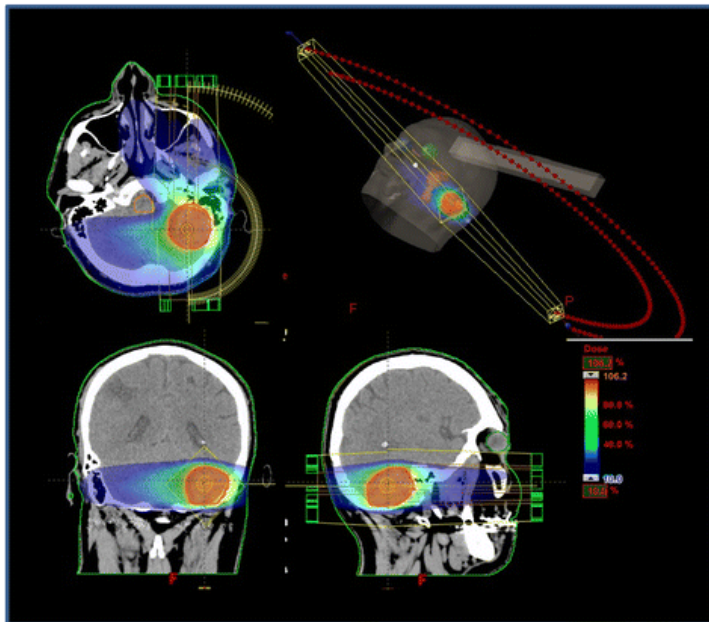
- Do all tumors require radiation?
- What is radiosurgery?



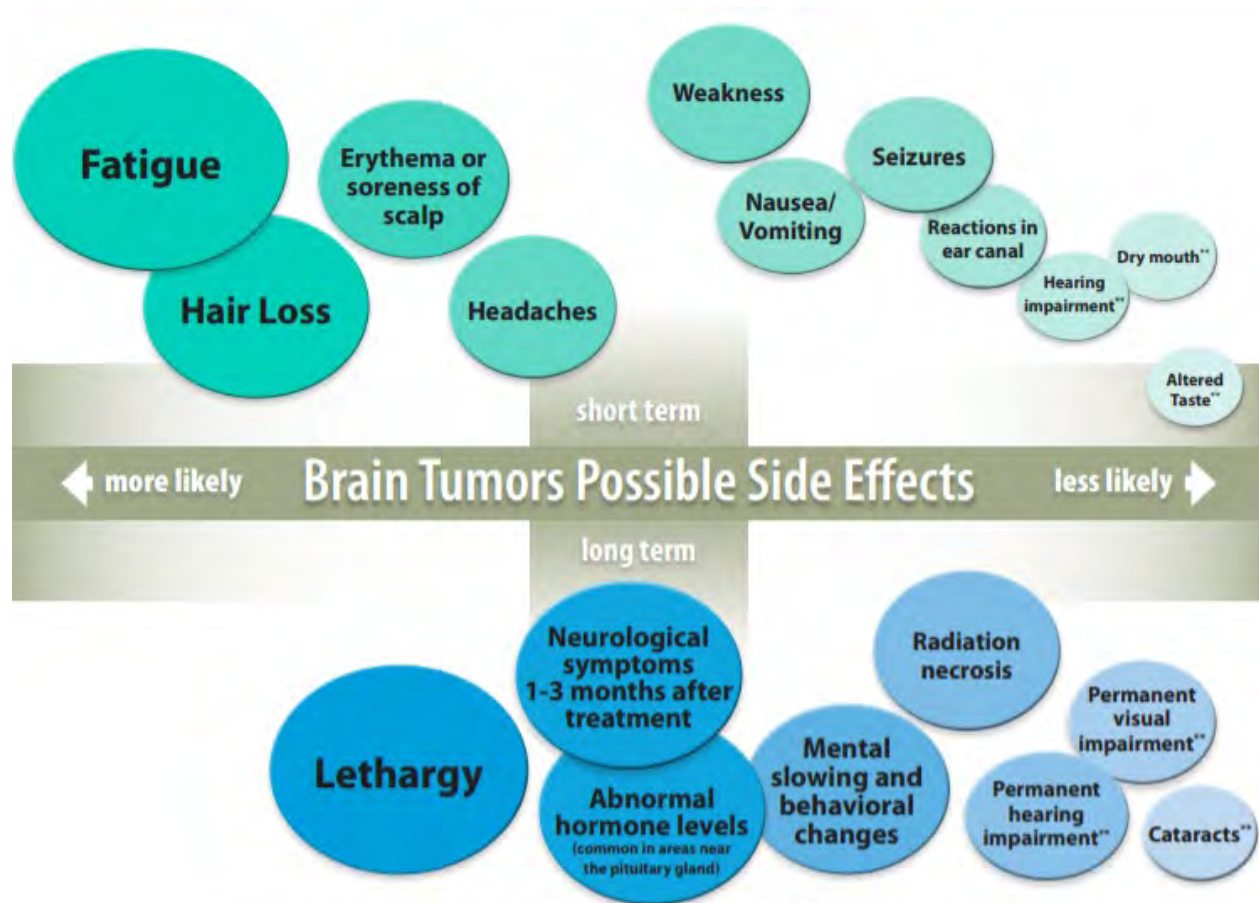


Radiation Therapy

- What is the difference between 'focused' and 'whole brain' radiation?



- How are protons different than photons?



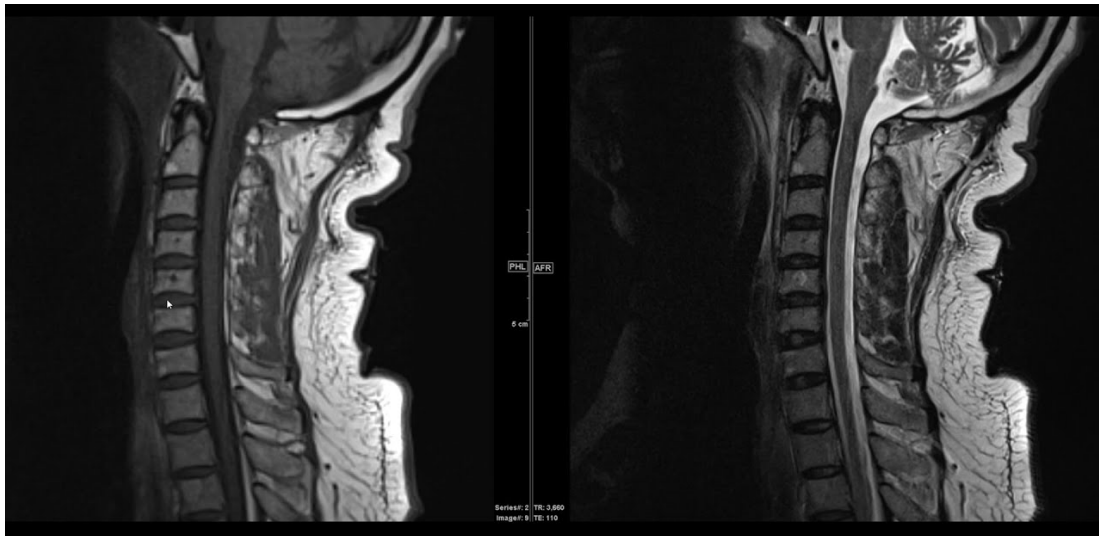
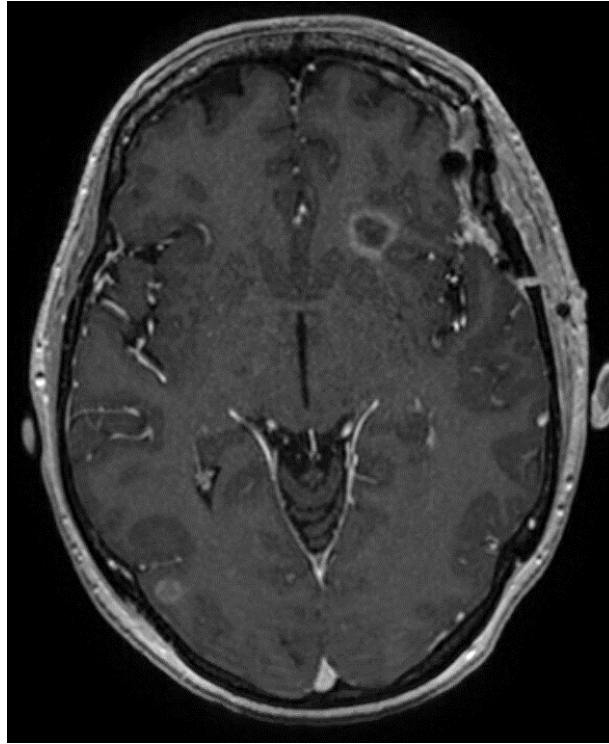
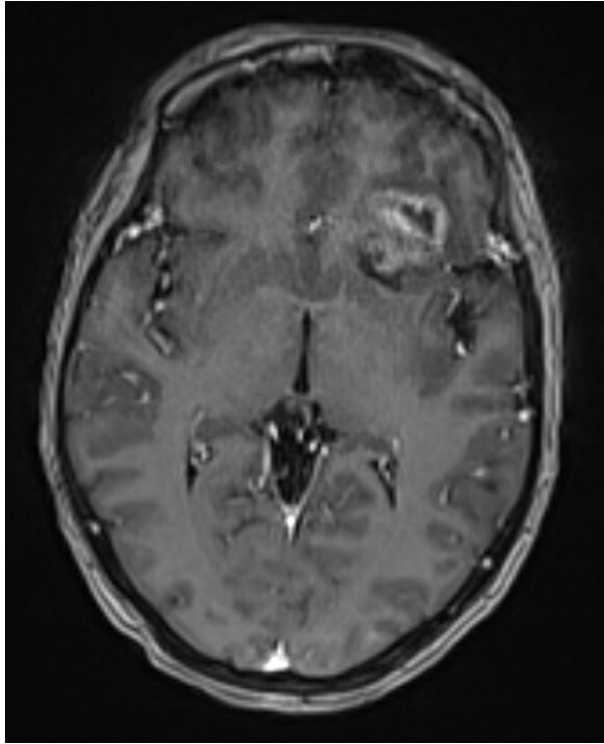
*Larger bubbles show higher likelihood of occurrence. This list does not represent all of the possible side effects. Please talk to your doctors about your specific diagnosis.
 ** These side effects are all very uncommon

Side Effects

- What types of short-term side effects can be expected from radiation?
- Are there things that can be done to minimize side effects?
- What long-term side effects are associated with treatment?

Radiation Therapy for Brain & Spine Cancers

- How do we know that the treatment is working?
- What treatment options are available if the cancer returns?
- Can radiation be given more than once?





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Audience Questions & Additional Discussion



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COVID-19



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ASTRO Recommendation on COVID-19 Vaccination for Cancer Patients Receiving RT

Cancer patients may have an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 and more severe disease if infected. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19."

mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may be administered to people with underlying medical conditions provided they have not had a severe or immediate allergic reaction to any of the ingredients in the vaccine." These guidelines also apply to cancer patients.

The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines do not include any virus, and there is no risk of contracting the infection from the vaccine. (Cont.)



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ASTRO Recommendation on COVID-19 Vaccination for Cancer Patients Receiving RT

Patients who have cancer, as well as those who have received treatment for cancer, may be immune compromised, but these patients may still receive COVID-19 vaccines as long as there is no increased risk of reaction to any of the components of the vaccine.

ASTRO encourages cancer patients who are actively receiving treatment such as radiation therapy to consult with their oncologists about the timing for vaccination, injection location and any unique considerations relevant for their treatments. Individuals with a prior history of cancer who are not in active treatment are encouraged to seek vaccination whenever it is made available to them.

Radiation Therapy for Brain Tumors



The brain is the center of thought, memory, emotion, speech, sensation and motor function. The spinal cord and special nerves called cranial nerves carry and receive messages between the brain and the rest of the body. Brain tumors cause damage because, as they grow, they can interfere with surrounding cells that serve vital roles in our everyday life.

The Central Brain Tumor Registry of the United States estimates that more than 688,096 persons are living with a diagnosis of primary brain and central nervous system tumors in the United States.

An estimated 77,670 new cases of primary benign and malignant brain and central nervous system tumors are expected to be diagnosed in the United States in 2016.

ASTRO.
TRANSFORMING CANCER CARE



Survivorship 

Treatment Team 

Resources 

Patient Education

Cancer Type

What is Radiation Therapy

Treatment Types

