

OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

During your treatment, you may work with a number of other healthcare professionals while undergoing radiation therapy. These specialists ensure that all of your physical and psychological needs are met during your treatment.

Social Workers

Social workers are available to provide a variety of supportive services to you and your family. They can provide counseling to help you and your family cope. They may also help arrange for home healthcare and other services.

Nutritionists

Nutritionists, also called dietitians, can work with you to help you eat right during your treatments. They can help you modify your eating plan if treatment is affecting your appetite and what you can eat, and can provide recipes, menu suggestions and information on nutritional supplements. They also address dietary issues and current developments that may affect cancer treatment outcomes.

Physical Therapists

Physical therapists can teach you exercises to help your body function properly during treatment. These exercises can help manage side effects, relieve pain and keep you healthy.

Other Doctors

Treating cancer requires a team effort that often includes doctors other than your radiation oncologist. Other doctors you may also see include surgeons, medical oncologists, radiologists, dentists and your own family doctor. You may need to see other specialists depending on your type of cancer. Ask your radiation oncologist about the role these healthcare providers may play in your treatment.

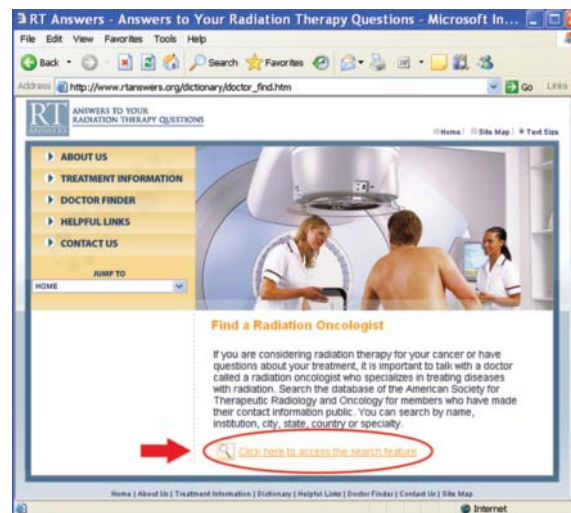


ABOUT ASTRO

The American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology is the largest radiation oncology society in the world with more than 8,500 members who specialize in treating cancer with radiation therapies. ASTRO's mission is to advance the practice of radiation oncology by promoting excellence in patient care, promoting research and disseminating research results.

LOCATE A CANCER SPECIALIST

If you or a family member has been diagnosed with cancer, it's important to meet with several cancer specialists, including a radiation oncologist. This will help you decide on the cancer treatment that works best for you, your cancer and your lifestyle. To locate a radiation oncologist in your area, please visit the Doctor Finder on www.rtanswers.org.



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THE RADIATION ONCOLOGY TREATMENT TEAM

Your Partners in
Cancer Treatment

ASTRO

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THERAPEUTIC
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INTRODUCTION

While you undergo radiation therapy, a team of highly trained medical professionals will be working together to make sure you receive the best care possible.

RADIATION ONCOLOGISTS



Radiation oncologists are the doctors directing your radiation therapy treatments. These physicians work with the other members of the radiation therapy team to develop your treatment plan and make sure that each treatment is given

accurately. Your radiation oncologist will also monitor your progress and adjust the treatment as necessary to make sure the radiation is hitting its target while minimizing side effects. Before, during and after your radiation therapy treatments, your radiation oncologist will work closely with other cancer doctors, such as medical oncologists and surgeons, to make sure the radiation is most effective.

Radiation oncologists have completed at least four years of college, four years of medical school, one year of general medical training, and four years of residency or specialty training in radiation oncology. They have extensive training in cancer medicine and the safe use of radiation to treat disease. After passing a special examination, they are certified by the American Board of Radiology.



RADIATION ONCOLOGY NURSES



Radiation oncology nurses work together with radiation oncologists and radiation therapists to care for you and your family at the time of consultation, while you are receiving treatment and during your follow-up care. They will explain the possible side effects you may feel and help you manage them. They will assess how you are doing during treatment and can help you cope with the changes you may experience. They can also provide support and counseling to you and your family.

Radiation oncology nurses are licensed registered nurses or licensed practical nurses. Many registered nurses in radiation therapy have additional accreditation in the specialty of oncology nursing. Advanced practice nurses, including clinical nurse specialists and nurse practitioners, have completed master's degree programs.

RADIATION THERAPISTS



Radiation therapists work with radiation oncologists to deliver the daily radiation treatments that your doctor has prescribed. They maintain daily records and regularly check the treatment machines to make sure they are working properly. Radiation therapists also closely follow you during treatment to alert your doctor to any problems.

Radiation therapists go through a two- to four-year educational program following high school or college. They take a special examination and may be certified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists. Many states also require radiation therapists to be licensed.



DOSIMETRISTS



After you decide on radiation, your doctor works with a dosimetrist to create a treatment plan. They use computers to develop a number of treatment plans to most effectively destroy the cancer while sparing normal tissue. Treatment plans are often very complex so dosimetrists work with the radiation oncologist and medical physicist to create a treatment plan that is right for you and your cancer.

Many dosimetrists start as radiation therapists and then, with intensive training, become dosimetrists. Others are graduates of one- to two-year dosimetry programs. They are certified by the Medical Dosimetrist Certification Board.

MEDICAL PHYSICISTS



Medical physicists work directly with your radiation oncologist during treatment planning and delivery. They are responsible for developing and directing quality control programs for equipment and procedures. They also make sure the equipment works properly by taking precise measurements of the radiation beam and performing other safety tests

regularly. Medical physicists also oversee the work of the dosimetrist and help to ensure that complex treatments are properly tailored for each patient.

Medical physicists have doctorate or master's degrees. They have completed at least four years of college, and then generally two- to four-years of graduate school. They also typically have one- to two-years of clinical physics training. Medical physicists are certified by the American Board of Radiology or the American Board of Medical Physics.