

# Radiation therapy for cancer pain relief

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Credit: Sora Shimazaki from Pexels

Patients with cancer have another tool in their toolbox for managing pain. Palliative radiation therapy is an effective option for relieving body aches associated with cancer.

Dr. Adam Holtzman, a Mayo Clinic radiation oncologist, explains how

innovation is improving [radiation therapy](#).

Doctors often use radiation to target [cancer cells](#), but did you know radiation therapy can also provide relief from pain?

"Radiation therapy is typically used in about 50% to 60% of all [cancer patients](#), it's very, very common," says Dr. Holtzman.

He says high-powered energy eradicates cancer cells, shrinking the tumors and helping to ease agonizing aches.

"Typically, 60% to 80% of [patients](#) usually have partial or even complete relief of their pain in two to four weeks," says Dr. Holtzman.

Mayo Clinic is using innovation to streamline the process. Even before patients walk through the door, they undergo a virtual planning scan that was created from a prior CT.

"What that means is patients using a diagnostic scan that was previously obtained, we map out the radiation plan, so we can deliver it quicker and more efficiently to maximize that patient's time and quality of life," explains Dr. Holtzman.

Why you might need palliative radiation therapy:

- Improve quality of life.
- Shrink tumors to relieve pressure.
- Manage bleeding/ulcers.
- Relieve bone pain.

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