

ASK A RADIATION ONCOLOGIST

Radiation Therapy for Upper Gastrointestinal (GI) Cancers

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RTAnswers
ANSWERS TO YOUR RADIATION THERAPY QUESTIONS

[YouTube.com/RTAnswers](https://www.youtube.com/RTAnswers)



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Today's Agenda

- Overview of upper GI cancers: Esophageal, Stomach, Liver & Pancreatic
- Treatment options for each
- Common questions
- Covid-19 vaccine for patients
- RT Answers patient education materials



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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.

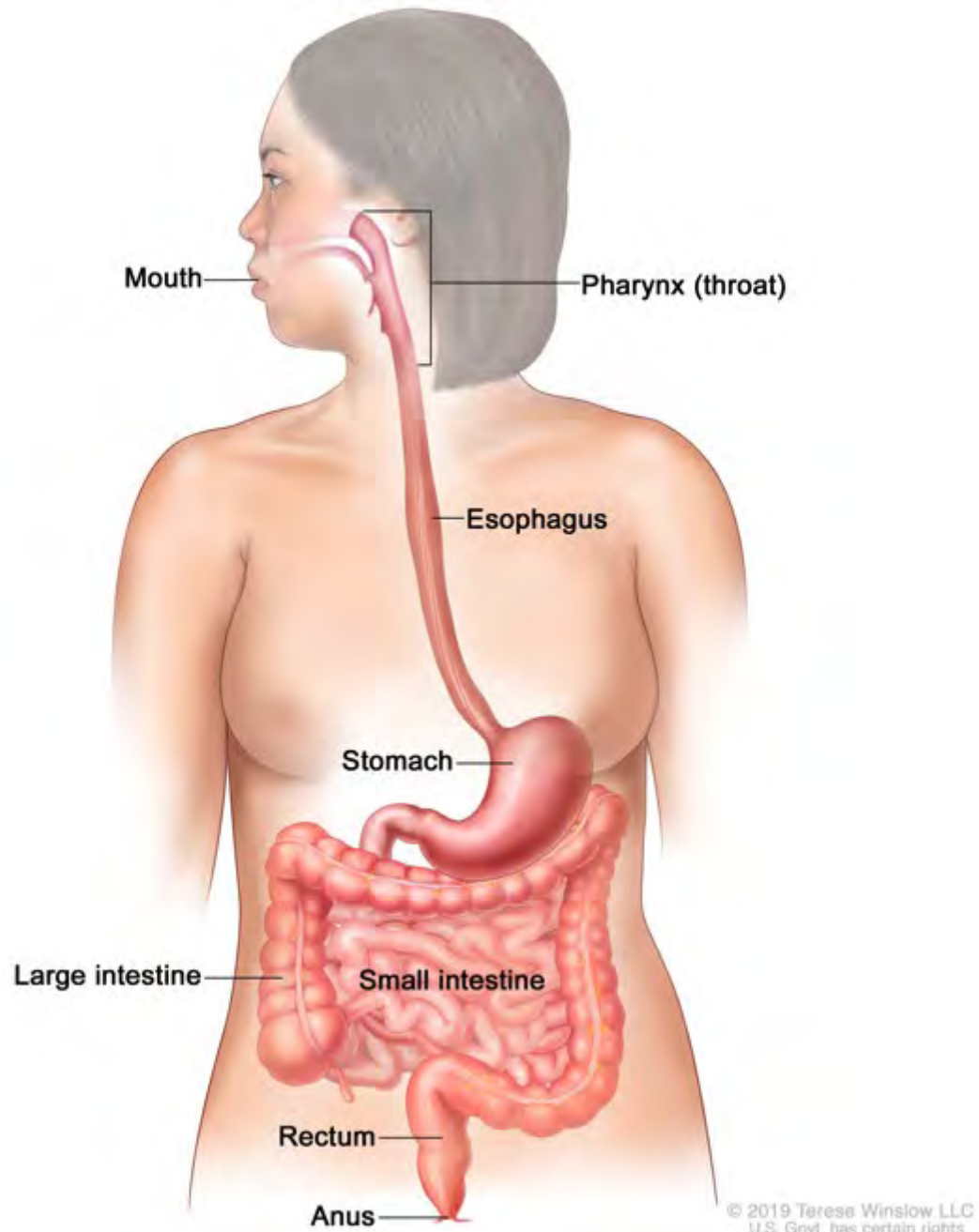


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Types of upper GI cancers
we will discuss:

Esophageal, Stomach, Liver,
& Pancreatic Cancers

Digestive Tract

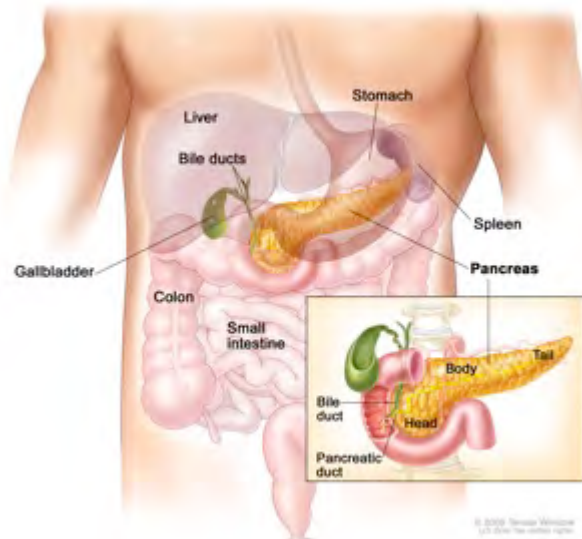
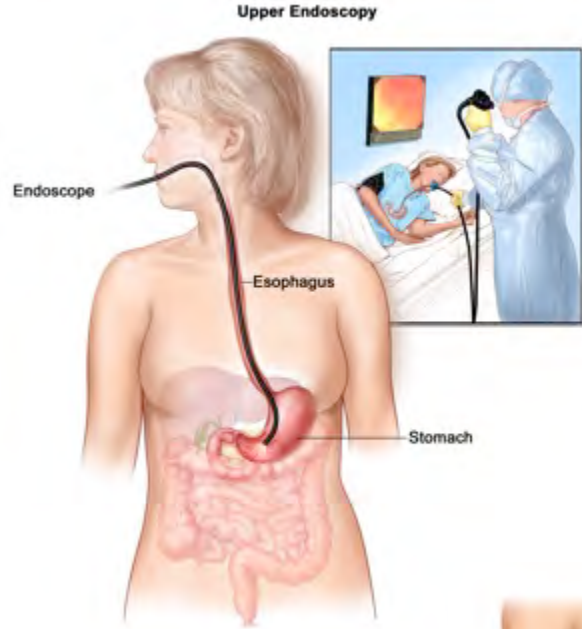


What is an
upper GI cancer?



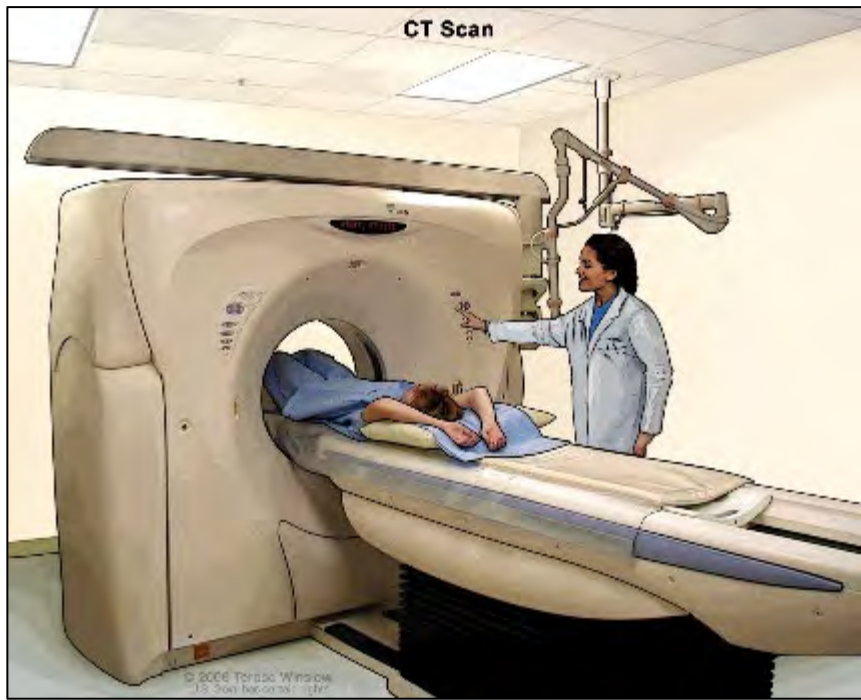
What are common symptoms of these cancers?

How are upper GI cancers diagnosed?



Many upper GI cancers are diagnosed via a camera with biopsy

Can these cameras reach the pancreas too?

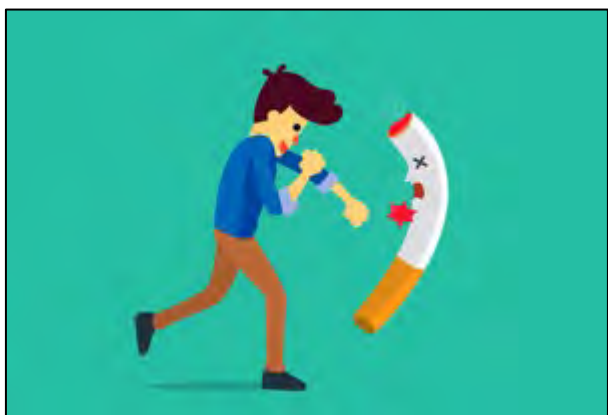


<https://nci-media.cancer.gov/pdq/media/images/428405.jpg>



<https://nci-media.cancer.gov/pdq/media/images/428431.jpg>

What happens after the cancer is found?



Is there a way to prevent upper GI cancers or catch cancer earlier?

Should I change my diet or take supplements?



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Treatment for Esophageal Cancer

Doctors & Treatments for Esophageal Cancer



- Which doctors are involved with patients with this cancer?
- Which types of treatments are offered by each physician?

Treatments for Esophageal Cancer



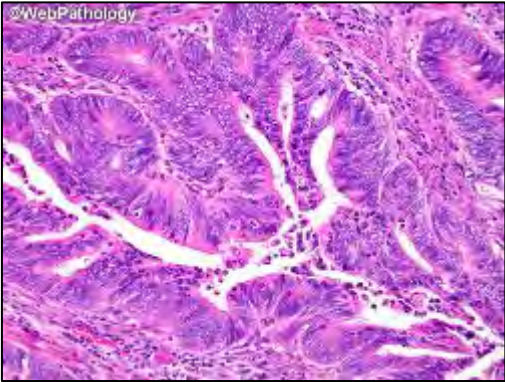
- How do doctors know which treatment(s) is best for me?
- Which treatment is first?





Treatments

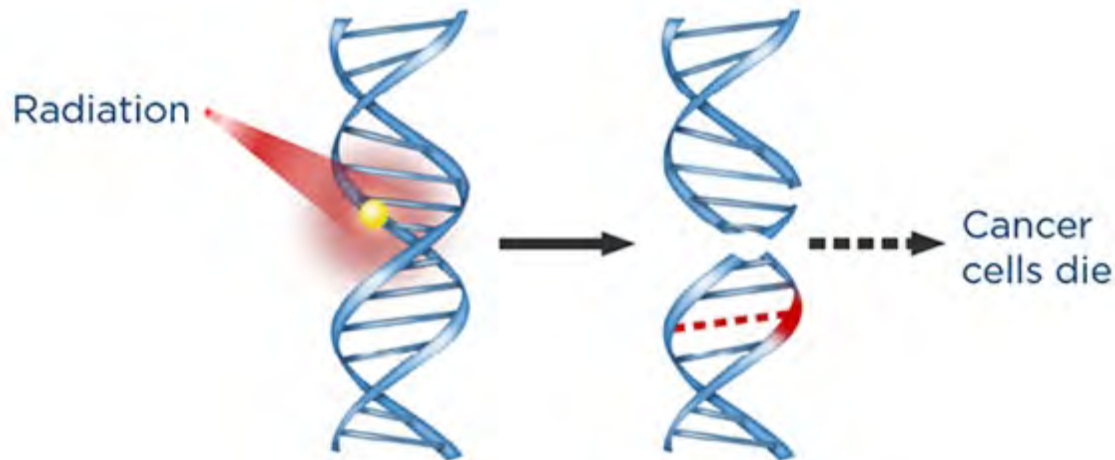
- Does everyone get chemotherapy, radiation and surgery?





Radiation Therapy

- What is radiation therapy?
- How does radiation therapy work?
- How often is radiation therapy given?
 - Why does it need to be given every day?





Radiation Therapy

- Why would patients get two treatments at the same time (chemotherapy and radiation therapy)?
 - Does that make side effects worse?
- What if the cancer shrinks?



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Treatment for Stomach Cancer



Treatment for Stomach Cancer

- How is stomach cancer treated?
- Why do most patients get chemotherapy and surgery, but not radiation therapy?





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Treatment for Pancreatic Cancer



Treatment Options

- Why do most patients get chemotherapy first?
- Why do I need to get frequent scans?
- If my first scan shows that the cancer cannot be removed with surgery, can that change with treatment?
 - How could radiation therapy help?



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Treatment for Liver Cancer



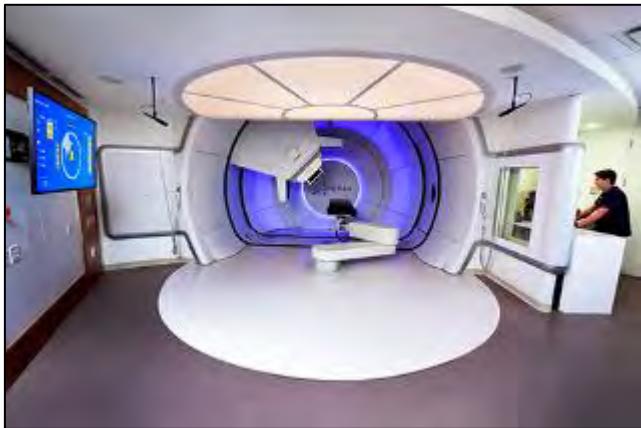
Treatment Options

- Is radiation therapy an option for patients with liver cancer?
- What type of radiation therapy is available for treatment of liver cancer?
- Who is a candidate for radiation therapy?



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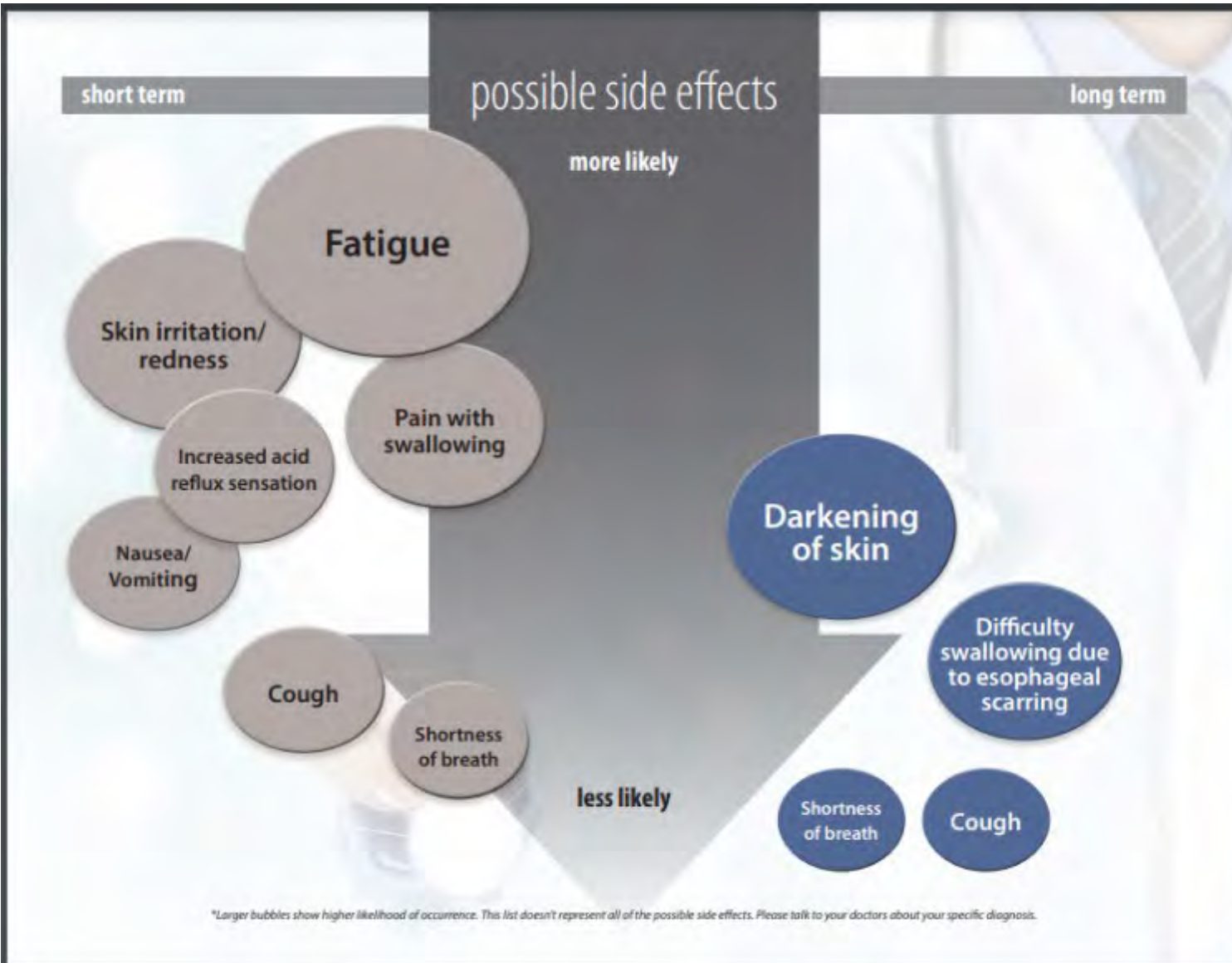
Commonly Asked Questions about Upper GI Cancers



General Treatment Questions

- How do we know that the treatment is working?
 - How do we check on the tumor?
- What treatment options are available if the cancer returns?
 - What if it spreads to other organs, such as the liver?
- Can radiation be given more than once?

Side Effects



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



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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.

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Radiation Therapy for Cancers of the Upper Gastrointestinal Tract



According to the American Cancer Society, this year, approximately 17,290 Americans will be diagnosed with esophageal cancer. Another 26,240 men and women will be diagnosed with stomach cancer.

Risk factors vary for each site and may include age, gender, family history, diet, activity level, alcohol consumption and tobacco use. Talk to your doctor about understanding your risk factors.

Screening is not generally recommended for esophageal and stomach cancers. However, some individuals who have a history of Barrett's esophagus may be encouraged to be screened.

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ASTRO Ask a Radiation Oncologist: Radiation Therapy for Gastrointestinal (GI) Cancers **RTAnswers**

RT Answers YouTube Live Event: May 24, 6 pm ET/3 pm PT

 Jessica Li, MD Medical Director, Radiation Therapy University of Washington	 Alexandra Paul, MD, MS The Johns Hopkins Hospital The Johns Hopkins University	 Cheri Hanks, MD Northwell Health	 Steven D. Cox, MD Miles Cancer
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For more information, visit RTAnswers.org

Ask a Radiation Oncologist: Radiation Therapy for...

ASTRO Ask a Radiation Oncologist: Radiation Therapy for Brain/Spine Cancers **RTAnswers**

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

 Andrea Arora, MD, PhD University of Washington David Geffen School of Medicine	 Lisa M. Hickey, MD University of Washington Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center Fred Hutchinson	 Abigail Dinkens, MD Miles Cancer	 Prerna Mishra, MD Miles Cancer Miles Cancer Center
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Ask a Radiation Oncologist: Radiation Therapy for...

ASTRO Ask a Radiation Oncologist: Radiation Therapy for Cervical Cancers **RTAnswers**

RT Answers Facebook Live Event: January 28, 7:30 pm ET/4:30 pm PT

 Nicole John, MD Shirley Ross & James University (ShirleyRoss)	 Ann Wang, MD, PhD MS Anderson Cancer Center	 Scott D'Amico, MD Loyola University Medical Center	 Jordyn Mays, MD U.S. Coast Guard
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Ask A Radiation Oncologist: Radiation Therapy for...

Patient Stories



David Goff

In 2016, while on active duty David Goff began to experience fatigue and later abdominal pain. In 2018, he was officially diagnosed with colon cancer. Read how David and his doctor came to his diagnosis and treatment decisions.

[READ HIS STORY](#)



Thad Lurie

Head and Neck Cancer
Years Diagnosed: 2019
Hometown: Broomfield, Colorado

[MY STORY](#)



Heather Brinkerhoff

Pancreatic Cancer
Years Diagnosed: 2019
Hometown: Menlo Park, California

[MY STORY](#)

More Stories

Patients and caregivers have shared stories of their experience with cancer in order to help other. Read the stories below or [share your story](#).

[Bladder Cancer](#)

[Breast Cancer](#)

[Caregiver](#)

[Colon Cancer](#)

[Head and Neck Cancer](#)

[Lung Cancer](#)

[Pancreatic Cancer](#)

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Thank you.



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