



Radiation therapy is a treatment for cancer and, less commonly, thyroid disease, blood disorders, and noncancerous growths.

therapy is a high-energy type known as ionizing radiation. Scientists still do not know exactly how radiation works as a treatment for cancer. They do know, however, that it breaks up the DNA of cancer cells in a way that disrupts their growth and division. In this way, radiation can kill cancer cells, preventing or slowing the spread of the disease. A doctor prescribes radiation therapy alone, but usually, they recommend it in combination with other treatments, such as chemotherapy, surgery, or both. Radiation can affect healthy cells as well as cancerous ones. When this happens, a person experiences side effects. Specific side effects depend on factors such as: the area receiving treatment, the person's overall health, the type and doses of radiation. Long term side effects also depend on the treatment site. They include: heart or lung problems, if radiation affects the chest, thyroid problems, leading to hormonal changes, if radiation affects the neck area, lymphedema, which involves lymph fluid building up and causing pain, hormonal changes, including a possibility of early menopause, from radiation in the pelvic area. There is a slight chance that high doses of radiation in certain areas can increase the risk of another form of cancer developing. Radiation therapy is a treatment for cancer and, less commonly, thyroid disease, blood disorders, and noncancerous growths. A doctor may recommend radiation for cancer at different stages. In the early stages, radiation therapy can help reduce the size of a tumor before surgery or kill remaining cancer cells afterward. In the later stages, it may help relieve pain as part of palliative care. One form of radiation treatment involves using a machine that produces a beam of radiation. The beam targets a specific area of the body. Another type involves putting a radioactive substance inside the body, either permanently or

of the disease. Sometimes a doctor prescribes radiation therapy alone, but usually, they recommend it in combination with other treatments, such as chemotherapy, surgery, or both. There are many types of cancer. Radiation can affect healthy cells as well as cancerous ones. When this happens, a person experiences side effects. Specific side effects depend on factors such as: the area receiving treatment, the person's overall health, the type and doses of radiation. Short term side effects radiation therapy include fatigue, skin changes, and nausea. Short term side effects vary, depending on the part of the body receiving radiation. They can include: fatigue, hair loss, diarrhea, skin changes, nausea and vomiting. A 2018 study published in BMJ Open recommends screening for anxiety and depression in people undergoing radiation therapy and offering counseling services to those who may benefit from them. Long term side effects also depend on the treatment site. They include: heart or lung problems, if radiation affects the chest, thyroid problems, leading to hormonal changes, if radiation affects the neck area, lymphedema, which involves lymph fluid building up and causing pain, hormonal changes, including a possibility of early menopause, from radiation in the

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their quality of life. It may also extend a person's life, in some