

Understanding The Facts About PROTON THERAPY



Dispelling some common myths and misconceptions about proton therapy.

Proton therapy is a life-saving cancer treatment backed by decades of science and delivered by proven technology. Unfortunately, a lack of awareness and understanding of the latest research demonstrating the great value and effectiveness of proton therapy has allowed myths and misconceptions to persist.

Proton therapy is one of the most innovative cancer treatments available today. It has been shown across multiple disease sites to improve overall survival – either by reducing life-threatening toxicities, being more biologically potent at tumor killing, or allowing for more targeted and escalated doses of radiation. In addition, proton therapy offers short- and long-term cost savings to the health care system and should be more broadly embraced as a high-value cancer treatment option for patients.

LET'S SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

MYTH:



Proton therapy is an experimental and investigational treatment for cancer.

FACT:

The first proton therapy treatments for cancer were delivered in 1954. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved proton therapy for treatment of cancer in 1988. It has become the standard of care for many types of cancer.

MYTH:



There is no substantial research on the efficacy of proton therapy.

FACT:

To date, more than 900 clinical studies have been published demonstrating the efficacy of proton therapy. The nation's top NCI designated and NCCN Comprehensive Cancer Centers value the use of proton therapy to improve outcomes for their patients.

MYTH:



Proton therapy centers are not widely available.

FACT:

Access to proton therapy is expanding across the U.S. and the technology is widely embraced internationally. While access to proton therapy is currently more limited than conventional radiation therapy in many areas of the U.S., there are now 42 proton therapy centers operating across the nation, with more in development.





MYTH:

Proton therapy is too expensive.

FACT:

Proton therapy, despite its higher initial costs and corresponding reimbursement compared to conventional radiation therapy, has demonstrated the ability to lower overall treatment expenses by minimizing toxic side effects that often lead to adverse events such as hospitalizations.¹ By mitigating these costly side effects and getting patients back to work more quickly,² proton therapy has the potential to alleviate financial burden for patients and decrease financial toxicity.



MYTH:

Proton therapy is only for specific types of cancer.

FACT:

Proton therapy treatment is suitable for the majority of cancer diagnoses, such as Brain, Breast, Esophageal, Gastrointestinal, Gynecologic, Head and Neck, Lung, Lymphomas, Sarcomas, Prostate, Skull and Spinal tumors, as well as other types of cancers, including recurrent cancer. Pediatric cancers, in particular, benefit greatly from proton therapy due to its targeted approach, high curability rate, and minimized impact on developing tissues.



MYTH:

Insurance does not cover proton therapy.

FACT:

Proton therapy is covered by Medicare and many commercial insurance plans include coverage for certain conditions. Proton therapy centers employ insurance specialists to help patients determine their particular plan benefits and navigate the insurance process.

¹ Baumann BC, et al. JAMA Oncol. 2020;6:237-246.
² Smith, GL, et al. IJROBP 2019;105:427-428.

The National Association for Proton Therapy (NAPT) and its members support cancer research and treatment innovation and are committed to raising awareness about the value of proton therapy among policymakers, insurers, caregivers and patients to ensure that this advanced treatment modality is affordable and available in communities across the country.

LEARN MORE: [PROTON-THERAPY.ORG](https://www.proton-therapy.org)



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