

Relieving Bone Pain Without Narcotics

RADIOISOTOPE THERAPY/LIQUID RADIATION

The team of physicians at Northeast Radiation Oncology Center (NROC) offers cancer patients in Northeastern Pennsylvania the opportunity to benefit from a new, state-of-the-art treatment known as radioisotope therapy. This new treatment is effective for people experiencing bone pain as a result of their cancer spreading to the bone. It is one type of radiation treatment also known as “liquid radiation.”

What is radioisotope therapy?

Radioisotope therapy is a precisely targeted cancer treatment that delivers radioisotopes directly to cancerous cells in the bone, destroying the cancer and thus relieving the pain associated with the disease.

Who is eligible for radioisotope therapy?

This specialized treatment is effective in relieving bone pain experienced by people whose prostate, breast, or other cancer has spread, or metastasized, to the bone. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the treatment for patients whose metastatic bone lesions are evident on a bone scan.

How does radioisotope therapy work?

Radioisotopes are delivered by injection into the patient’s blood stream. The blood system then carries the radioisotopes directly to bones throughout the body that are affected by the spreading cancer. There it precisely targets the cancer and emits radiation to kill the diseased cells, thereby relieving the pain caused by the cancer. The injection takes about one minute. Patients generally experience pain relief within one week.

What are the advantages to radioisotope therapy?

Unlike opioids or other short-acting narcotic medications used to relieve pain, radioisotope treatment provides continuous pain relief for an average of 4 months. Up to 72% of the people who receive radioisotope therapy experience such pain relief. In addition, radioisotope treatment avoids some of the unwanted side effects that result from narcotic medications, such as drowsiness and constipation.

Where is radioisotope therapy available?

NROC in Dunmore and Mercy Hospital in Scranton are the only facilities in Northeastern Pennsylvania licensed to administer these stringently regulated radioisotope treatments. The therapy typically is administered on an outpatient basis.