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## *What are the Stages of Radiation Treatment?*

The process of treating a patient with radiation involves five essential steps:

- ◆ Initial Patient Examination and Evaluation
- ◆ Treatment Planning
- ◆ Simulation and Dosimetry
- ◆ Treatment Delivery and Management
- ◆ Follow Up

In addition, all types of radiation therapy involve a series of specific planning activities:

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <u>Locate the target</u>     | This may require complex imaging studies to precisely locate all areas of tumor volume.  |
| <u>Immobilize the target</u> | This may involve positioning the patient, implanting fiducial markers for localization or other target fixation method.  |
| <u>Focus the radiation</u>   | This may be achieved by directing an external beam, placing an internal source or other targeting technology.  |
| <u>Shape the radiation</u>   | This may be performed by developing beam shaping devices, coordinating intensity modulation of the beam or other beam attenuation to conform the treatment beam to the target. |
| <u>Treat the patient</u>     | Deliver a radiation dose to the tumor volume, while avoiding nearby critical structures that must be protected.  |

The radiation oncologist manages the entire process of treatment from the initial decision to treat, to the planning, preparation, execution and effectiveness of treatment.



### Note:

**When coding radiation oncology services, it is essential to note that each procedure performed must be coded based upon the documentation included in the patient record. It is incorrect to 'assume' that because the patient has a complex consultation and complex treatment plan that all services (simulation, isodose, treatment delivery, etc.) are automatically coded as complex.**