

Patient FAQs about Interventional Radiology



What is interventional radiology (IR)?

Interventional radiologists are board-certified physicians who use imaging guidance, including x-ray, CT scanning and ultrasound, to help deliver minimally invasive, targeted treatments with a quicker recovery. IR addresses many of today's toughest medical problems, including vascular conditions, many types of cancer and men's and women's health conditions with minimal discomfort and unprecedented precision. Interventional radiologists are the board-certified physicians who deliver these treatments.

How does IR work?

Most IR treatments begin with the prick of a needle. The interventional radiologist—who is trained in image-guided, minimally invasive therapies—directs a thin wire and a catheter, the size of a strand of spaghetti, through a blood vessel to treat the source of pain or disease. It may sound futuristic, but that's exactly how some of the most innovative and effective treatments in medicine are happening today. Interventional radiology treatments often come with less risk, less pain, shorter recovery times and better outcomes than traditional (open) surgery.

Is interventional radiology right for me?

Breakthroughs in technology and imaging have created new treatment choices for patients. In this new era of medicine, personalized medicine means doing the right thing for each patient. Ask your doctor about treatments that are less invasive. And, if you are a candidate for open surgery, consider getting a second opinion from an interventional radiologist. There may be a minimally invasive approach that could dramatically reduce your pain, risk and recovery time.

Should I be concerned about radiation safety?

The use of radiation in diagnosing and treating patients has significantly advanced the field of medicine and saved or extended countless lives. As with any medical procedure, the use of radiation is not without risk. Interventional radiologists undergo extensive training in radiation safety and know how to mitigate the risks of radiation by following established federal guidelines. IRs make it a priority to minimize the amount of radiation necessary to complete the treatment.

Do interventional radiologists work with my care team?

IRs practice coordinated clinical care—in clinics and on collaborative teams—working closely with your other physicians to ensure that you receive the best possible care. IRs manage your health issues or disease treatment throughout the entire course of your care—before, during and after your treatment. During follow-up appointments, your IR will evaluate your progress and address any remaining issues or symptoms that you may have.

Why is interventional radiology considered modern medicine?

IR's culture of continuous innovation has led to development of targeted treatments for virtually every organ system in the body. Innovative treatments developed by interventional radiologists are now used routinely across all fields of medicine. IRs have not only created breakthrough techniques, but also the tools and technologies to perform them.

How do I find an IR?

Visit the SIR **Doctor Finder** (sirweb.org/findanir)—a comprehensive database of SIR-member interventional radiologists practicing in the United States and internationally—to **find an interventional radiologist** near you. Use the search fields on the left side of the screen to search based on geographic location or by state or country. If you already know the name of an IR in your area, you can enter their last name. Information included in each profile includes practice address and contact information, the physician's areas of expertise, languages spoken and biographical information.