

## New radiation therapy gives breast cancer patients a more direct treatment option

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It's a bluebird day on a Benton ranch. Mares are in foal, the smell of new spring growth is in the air and LaNora Moore is grateful to be back at work after a breast cancer diagnosis put her into a tailspin six months ago.

The 67-year-old small animal and equine therapist is more than willing to share her story as she guides an Acuscope across the neck and shoulder of a horse named Platinum CD, sending electrical stimulation to the cutting horse's sore area to stimulate natural endorphins.

"If it will help anyone else that is going through this terror, I'm glad to do it," said Moore, who was able to take advantage of a relatively new breast cancer radiation treatment that took only five days. "Two months off of work, that was it. I'm feeling good."

MammoSite is a partial breast radiation treatment comprised of a balloon catheter that internally delivers radiation to the tumor.

Treatment is completed in five days.

And radiation exposure to the rest of the breast, skin, ribs, lungs and heart is minimized.

Traditional external beam radiation typically is a six- to eight-week treatment that exposes the entire breast to the radiation.

MammoSite was cleared for use by the FDA in May 2002. Moore's breast cancer specialist, Dr. Christopher Sockrider of Shreveport Breast Center, began using MammoSite in 2005. Willis-Knighton Cancer Center also is using MammoSite.

"It's not for everyone," said Sockrider, who, with his partner, Dr. Michael Schwalke, have dedicated their practice to the treatment of breast cancer. "But in certain patients, it's just as effective as the traditional radiation treatment."

MammoSite is a site-specific radiation therapy recommended for tumors no larger than 1.2 inches. Patients whose cancer has spread to the lymph nodes or other locations on the breast would not be candidates, explained Sockrider.

Moore's breast cancer confined and non-aggressive and was caught early. A routine mammogram she'd held off for four years picked up the cancer in the early stages of its growth.

"I had gone in for a regular checkup and my family doctor insisted I go get a mammogram," said Moore, who'd lost her husband to lymphoma just two years earlier. "Needless to say, I've been pushing other women to go get one ever since."

When doctors told Moore she had cancer, they also told her it might be another month before she could see a specialist. The thought of waiting a month terrified her. A friend told her to call Shreveport Breast Center.

"They asked if I could come in that day," said Moore, remembering how startled she was the center could see her so quickly. "I couldn't go that day, but I went the next day. It was a Tuesday. And by Thursday, I was scheduled for a lumpectomy."

Moore was an ideal candidate for MammoSite. She said she felt confident it was a good choice after Sockrider explained the process.

MammoSite treatment begins shortly after the lumpectomy. The device is a balloon catheter that is placed inside the tumor resection cavity and stays there through the five days of treatment. The applicator shaft, a tube connected to the balloon, remains outside the breast.

Once in place, the balloon is inflated with saline to fill the cavity and allow the physician to internally administer the prescribed dosage of radiation to the targeted tissue.



Cancer survivor LeNora Moore, an equine physical therapist, works on a horse named Platinum CD. Moore treats horses with electrotherapy. (Mike Silva/The Times)

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More about Acuscope treatment:

[www.thorpinstitute.com/html/about\\_the\\_acuscope.html](http://www.thorpinstitute.com/html/about_the_acuscope.html)

BreastCancer.org: [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org)

American Cancer Society: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

Susan G. Komen for the Cure: <http://cms.komen.org/komen/index.htm>

Willis-Knighton Cancer Center: [www.wkhs.com/cancerfr/](http://www.wkhs.com/cancerfr/)

MammoSite: [www.mammosite.com](http://www.mammosite.com)

When the patient returns for treatment, a radioactive "seed" is inserted within the inflated balloon, beginning the sequence of daily treatments (about 15 minutes each) over five days.

"I was a little weak, but there was no pain and I wasn't sick," said Moore, who went through no chemotherapy. "The only hard part was lying still sometimes for more than an hour while they got the balloon in just the right spot. But if it's going to save my life, I think I could do anything for five days."

Many insurance companies pay for internal radiation therapy, but specific coverage for MammoSite depends on a patient's individual health-care plan.

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