
With a little help from his "friends", 3-year-old takes on rare cancer

Video	Audio
	"Spiderman!"
	Three-year-old Rhett Flaten loves superheroes.
	"I like all the superheroes!"
Kyle Flaten	"You like all the superheroes? Yes."
Katie Flaten	"He's really into these superheroes."
Rhett nats	"Yeah."
	Playing with superheroes and other toys is part of Rhett's morning routine at Mayo Clinic, where he's receiving targeted proton beam radiation treatment.
Katie and Kyle Flaten Rhett's Parents	"He usually looks forward to it, like this morning. 'I'm ready to go see my doctor friends.' That's what he calls everybody here."
	In February 2021, Rhett was diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma, a rare type of cancer that occurs in the bones or soft tissue around bones. Rhett's tumor is located near his spine, and surgery is not a good option.
Kyle Flaten	"Through our research, we really came to understand the benefits of proton beam radiation."
Safia Ahmed, M.D. Radiation Oncology Mayo Clinic	"Rhett came to us from Wisconsin, and he came specifically for proton therapy. Given his young age, given the location of the tumor, proton therapy made the most sense for Rhett's treatment."
Dr. Ahmed	Dr. Safia Ahmed is Rhett's radiation oncologist. "The benefit of proton therapy for Rhett is that we're able to treat the tumor completely with the dose needed to control this, while minimizing radiation dose to the spinal cord, minimizing radiation dose to the esophagus, the lungs and

	the heart — and all the other soft tissues around it. This dose reduction to normal tissues is really important for someone of Rhett's age."
Katie Flaten	"As a parent, I personally feel extremely fortunate to be as close to Mayo, Rochester as we are."
Rhett nats	"Yeah, that one!"
	"I think anyone in this situation just wants to do what's best for their child. And we feel confident that coming here and getting this therapy was in Rhett's best interest."
Beep, beep, beep nats	
	Rhett's prognosis is good overall. And, so far, he's responding well to treatment.
Nats of Rhett playing	"Ah!"
Katie and Kyle Flaten	"And then to see Rhett go through the chemo and radiation, and he's just, it's like one of the most inspiring things I've ever witnessed."
Toy nats	
	"For him to be able to just live in the present every day and face some extremely scary things ...
Toy charge nats	
	... he's just extremely brave and optimistic."
Toy nats	
	One might even say heroic.
Rhett nats	"Ow!"
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm DeeDee Stiepan.