

Specialists Who May Be Involved in Your Cancer Care

During treatment and follow-up, your doctor may refer you to one or more physicians and other health care providers who are specialists in treating cancer.

The following is a list of the most common specialists and others who might be involved in your care, and a brief description of what they do.

At the end of this section, there is a blank sheet for you to write the names and numbers of others involved in your care.

Cancer Registry Staff: Employees who work with you to ensure that Holy Cross Hospital has the most current information for conducting patient follow-up.

Dietitian: A health professional with special training in nutrition who can help with dietary choices, including developing diets to help ease nausea and loss of appetite that sometimes accompanies cancer treatments. Also called a nutritionist.

Gastroenterologist: A doctor who specializes in treating disorders of the digestive system.

Gynecologist: A doctor who specializes in treating diseases of the female reproductive organs.

Gynecologic oncologist: A doctor who specializes in treating cancers of the female reproductive organs.

Hematologist: A doctor who specializes in treating blood disorders.

Home Care Program Skilled Nursing Services: A special service of Holy Cross Hospital that allows patients to receive care at home during times of illness and recovery.

Hospice care: An at-home program, which provides basic medical care and emotional support, is available for patients in the final stages of terminal illness.

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and nursing assistants: Holy Cross Hospital employees who provide supportive care around the clock.

Medical imaging experts: Doctors and other health professionals trained in using the most up-to-date techniques, including mammography, CT scans, nuclear medicine studies such as PET, ultrasound and MRI to accurately pinpoint tumors and cancerous tissue.

Medical oncologist: A doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating cancer using chemotherapy, hormonal therapy and biological therapy. A medical oncologist often is the main health care provider for someone who has cancer. A medical oncologist also provides supportive care and may coordinate treatment provided by other specialists.

* Source: *The National Cancer Institute*

Oncologist: A doctor who specializes in treating cancer. Some oncologists specialize in a particular type of cancer treatment. For example, a radiation oncologist specializes in treating cancer with radiation.

Oncology clinical research team: A group of health care professionals who work closely with the medical staff to pinpoint opportunities for participation in clinical trials that may be testing the latest, state-of-the-art drugs and therapies.

Oncology nurse: A nurse who specializes in treating and caring for people who have cancer. Oncology nurses administer chemotherapy and other intravenous (IV) therapies as well as emotional support.

Oncology nurse navigator: An oncology nurse navigator serves as an advocate and guides patients throughout their cancer journeys. The navigator is available to provide information patients want or need once they have received a diagnosis of cancer.

Pain management team: Physicians and other health care professionals who can provide a variety of medications to relieve cancer pain.

Palliative care team: The palliative care department is a team of professionals consisting of medical doctors, nurse practitioners, pastoral care, pharmacology and administrative support services. They treat the whole person; meeting the patient's medical, emotional, spiritual and social needs to provide comfort, dignity and the best possible quality of life.

Pastoral care providers and on-call clergy: Representatives of different faiths who are ready to offer emotional and spiritual support.

Pathologist: A doctor who identifies diseases by studying cells and tissues under a microscope.

Pharmacists: Specially-trained health professionals who prepare and distribute medical drugs. They work with physicians to ensure that treatments are safe and effective.

Physical therapist: A health professional who teaches exercises and physical activities that help condition muscles and restore strength and movement.

Plastic surgeon: A surgeon who specializes in reducing scarring or disfigurement caused by accidents, birth defects or treatment for disease.

Pulmonologist: A doctor who specializes in treating disease of the lungs. Also called a pulmonary or lung specialist.

Psychiatric liaison nurse: A specially trained registered nurse who can provide options for social and psychological support.

* Source: *The National Cancer Institute*

Radiation oncologist: A doctor who specializes in using radiation to treat cancer.

Radiation therapy technologists: Health professionals who deliver accurate radiation therapy doses prescribed by radiation oncologists.

Reconstructive surgeon : A doctor who can surgically reshape or rebuild (reconstruct) a part of the body, such as a woman's breast after surgery for breast cancer.

Respiratory therapist: A health professional trained to evaluate and treat people who have breathing problems or other lung disorders.

Social worker: A professional who helps patients and families with psychosocial issues by using patient and family education, conducting support group and education group sessions, providing resource lists and community resources, and counseling on relationship and grief issues. Hospital-based social workers and case managers coordinate financial and insurance matters, home care needs and other issues surrounding the change from hospital to home.

Surgeon: A doctor who removes or repairs a part of the body by operating on a patient.

Thoracic (chest) surgeon: A doctor who specializes in operating on organs inside the chest, including the heart and lungs.

Thoracic surgical oncologist: A surgeon who specializes in operating on tumors found inside the chest.

Urologic oncologist: A doctor who specializes in treating cancers of the urinary system.

Urologist: A doctor who specializes in treating problems in the urinary organs of females and urinary and sex organs in males.

TIP: If your doctor hasn't referred you to a specialist and/or you'd like a second opinion, ask him or her to do so. Or call Holy Cross Hospital's Physician Referral Service at 301-754-8800.

