

Ready to start planning your care? Call us at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225) to make an appointment.

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Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

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As a patient, what can Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center offer me that I might not find elsewhere?

At Memorial Sloan Kettering, the sole focus is cancer. The physicians here treat more cancer patients in a year than most doctors treat in a lifetime. To patients, this specialization translates to unequalled medical expertise and superb patient care. The benefits of being treated at Memorial Sloan Kettering include:

The most advanced methods of diagnosis and treatment, including new therapies that may not yet be available in your community.

Everything you might need to take care of your cancer: diagnosis, treatment, psychosocial support, pain management, rehabilitation, and assistance in returning to your life after cancer.

A patient-focused approach where quality of life is always a priority, both during and after treatment.

Support for patients' friends and family, who are often intimately involved in the complex medical and emotional issues surrounding cancer and its treatment.

Assistance in locating additional treatment and support services in your own community, especially important if you travel to Memorial Sloan Kettering from a distance.

A network of outpatient facilities that provide medical and radiation oncology more conveniently for patients who live in the New York suburbs.

Answers to your questions. Cancer treatment is complicated, and you and your family will have many questions. At Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center there is no such thing as an unimportant question. Your questions are encouraged and will receive answers from the appropriate specialist or support person. A large collection of patient education materials is available to help explain the specifics of cancer and its treatment complexities.

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Should I start my cancer treatment at Memorial Sloan Kettering, or could I go there after being treated someplace else?

It is always best if we initiate treatment because with cancer, the course of the disease is defined by its initial treatment. Receiving the right treatment from the start can significantly increase a patient's chance for a cure. The in-depth expertise and superior quality of care that is provided at Memorial Sloan Kettering have proven benefits. In the area of surgery, for example, in a study published in November 1998 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, our researchers found that mortality rates were 40 percent to 80 percent lower for cancer patients in hospitals that had the most experience performing particular surgical procedures. This finding supports the notion that in-depth experience in treating cancer can have a dramatic effect on a patient's chances for a cure.

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A family member has been diagnosed with cancer, and I want him/her to be treated at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. How do I arrange that?

For assistance in deciding whom to contact and what the first step should be, we invite you to call Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center's Physician Access Service toll-free at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225). For detailed information on how to make an appointment,

including special information for pediatric patients, see [Making an Appointment](#). The care advisors and oncology nurses staffing the service know our physicians and are familiar with the various cancers and treatment modalities and the special services that we offer. They can help you with finding the right expert for your particular needs.

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How should I prepare for my first appointment at the Center?

Bring with you all the medical records and test results pertaining to your case. The specialists and nurses at the Physician Access Service and the staff of the physician you are going to see will help you determine what these are and assist you with the process for obtaining your records, slides, and scans. At a minimum, x-rays and pathology slides (if a biopsy or surgery has already been done) will be needed on the day of your appointment. Also be sure to bring the health insurance identification cards for each plan that covers you and proof of your address (such as a driver's license or telephone bill). [See Insurance & Billing](#) for detailed information about coverage and insurance.

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Is it all right if I don't come alone?

For your first visit and, indeed, for subsequent visits, it is very helpful if a friend or family member can accompany you. Patients are often naturally anxious about their condition and may not be feeling their best. You will be receiving significant amounts of new information during your visit. You may find that having another person there to act as an extra pair of "ears," to take notes, to ask questions you might not think of at that moment — and to afford you emotional support — is very much to your advantage.

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Will I have only one doctor at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, or more?

You will be treated by a team of doctors. One doctor will be in charge of your care and you will have as many consulting specialists and subspecialists as needed during the course of your treatment. One of the advantages of coming to a comprehensive cancer center like Memorial Sloan Kettering is the opportunity to be treated by doctors with a broad spectrum of experience in treating many different aspects of cancer.

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If I decide to be treated at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, does that mean I don't get to see my own physician anymore?

In fact, exactly the opposite is often true. Whether a physician refers you to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, or you decide to come on your own, we understand that your doctor is still your doctor. Memorial Sloan Kettering physicians are experts in cancer treatment; your doctor is the expert on your overall health and well-being. Our specialists will want to stay in touch with your doctor during your treatment, and your doctor should continue seeing you on a regular basis.

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What if I don't have a primary care physician of my own? Can I still come to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center?

Yes — more than half our patients are “self-referred.” No matter how many specialists are on your treatment team, you will have one Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center physician coordinating your care as an inpatient or outpatient. That doctor will see you on a regular basis for examinations and to discuss your progress and answer your questions.

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I live in the suburbs, and although I don't mind coming into Manhattan for surgery, I would prefer to avoid commuting for follow-up chemotherapy or radiation therapy visits. Can I receive these services closer to my home?

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center has a network of regional programs that brings our cancer care to communities outside New York City. These centers are staffed by Memorial Sloan Kettering physicians and provide the same standard of treatment as our Manhattan locations. Services include outpatient radiation oncology, medical oncology, and surgical consultations. Our regional network includes facilities in Westchester, Long Island and New Jersey. Please see [locations](#) for more detailed information. To make an appointment, you may call our Physician Access Service at [800-525-2225](tel:800-525-2225), or you may call these sites directly.

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I'm being treated in my community, but I work in New York City and I can't get to my local hospital to take my daily radiotherapy there. Can I receive it at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center?

Yes, that can certainly be arranged. For information, call our Radiation Oncology Department's Physician Access Office at [833-292-5329](tel:833-292-5329). You can also receive your therapy at one of Memorial Sloan Kettering's regional sites.

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I live outside of the United States. What services does Memorial Sloan Kettering offer to international patients?

International patients are welcome to make [in-person appointments](#) with our world-renowned cancer specialists or request [an online second opinion](#). Our guest services staff will coordinate with you, your family member, or an agency representative to schedule the services you have requested. There is no referral needed.

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Does Memorial Sloan Kettering offer programs for people who want to take an active role in maintaining their good health and increasing their chances of never developing cancer?

Today we know that we are best able to cure cancer when we find it in its earliest stages. Better yet, we now know that you can help reduce your risk of developing cancer by undergoing the appropriate screening tests, paying attention to your family history, and adopting a healthy lifestyle. Memorial Sloan Kettering provides numerous prevention, screening, and wellness services. Information about these services; up-to-date information on cancer screening tests and guidelines; step-by-step instructions for a variety of self-exams; guidance on how to stop smoking; and how to follow a healthy diet can be found in on our website in our [Risk Assessment & Screening](#) section.

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What about those so-called alternative or complementary therapies that many people use? Does Memorial Sloan Kettering have anything like that?

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center has an [Integrative Medicine Service](#) designed to enhance patients' and family members' quality of life through healing regimens that address the body, mind, and spirit. We offer many types of massage, spiritual healing, art and music therapy, acupuncture, hypnotherapy, meditation, guided imagery and visualization, yoga, t'ai chi, nutritional counseling, and more. These therapies may benefit the patient and/or family member. They differ from alternative treatments, which are unproved and sometimes dangerous, and which typically are promoted for use instead of mainstream cancer care. We carefully avoid therapies that are potentially harmful, lack evidence of benefit, or may compromise the effectiveness of the patient's mainstream cancer treatment. Our Integrative Medicine Outpatient Center is open to all cancer patients, families, and friends, regardless of their hospital affiliation. For information and appointments for these fee-for-service therapies, you can call [646-888-0800](#).

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