Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Thyroid Cancer Treatment Plan at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK)

This information explains your thyroid cancer treatment plan at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

Treatment for thyroid cancer is based on many factors related to your tumor. Your healthcare provider will talk with you about a treatment plan that is right for you, and you will get more information about your treatments.

Throughout your treatment, your care team may include a surgeon, a nuclear medicine doctor, and an endocrinologist (doctor who treats diseases that have to do with hormones). Your care team will talk with you about how often you will come for visits, what tests you will have, and who will provide your care. These things depend on your specific treatment plan and they will change over time.

Initial Treatment

Usually, the initial treatment is surgery to remove your tumor. After surgery, you may also have radioactive iodine therapy.

Early Follow-up Care

After your initial treatment, you will continue to see your surgeon, endocrinologist, and nuclear medicine doctor. Over time, you will probably only need to see 1 of these specialists. You and your healthcare provider will decide when that time is right for you.

Ongoing Follow-up Care

After this early follow-up period, you may be eligible to join the Thyroid Cancer Survivorship Program. In the survivorship program, you will receive support as you recover from the physical and emotional effects of thyroid cancer and its treatments. Your healthcare provider will help you decide when you're ready for this step.

A survivorship nurse practitioner (NP), who is an expert in the care of cancer survivors, will be responsible for your care in the survivorship program. Your survivorship NP is a member of your healthcare team. You will see your survivorship NP for your follow-up visits, which will include information for managing your thyroid medication, screening for treatment side effects, and tests to make sure your cancer hasn't returned. Your survivorship NP will also recommend other cancer screenings as needed and talk with you about ways to prevent new health problems.

Transition to Your Local Healthcare Provider

After time, your follow-up care may be transferred from MSK to an endocrinologist in your community or your local healthcare provider. We can help you find an endocrinologist if you don't already have one. This often occurs about 2 years after referral to survivorship program, but the timing will depend on your particular thyroid cancer and your response to treatment.

Your MSK healthcare provider or survivorship NP will send your local healthcare provider a detailed summary of your care at MSK, as well as copies of your test results. This report will also include our recommendations for future care based on the treatment you received. Your MSK healthcare provider or survivorship NP will continue to be available to you and your local healthcare provider if you have any questions about your care, or if you develop a new thyroid problem.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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