

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

[Make an Appointment](#)

[Back](#)

[Managing Symptoms & Side Effects](#)

[Learn About Our Cancer Treatment](#)

[Refer a Patient](#)

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#### ABOUT US

[Our mission, vision & core values](#)

[Leadership](#)

[History](#)

[Equality, diversity & inclusion](#)

[Annual report](#)

[Give to MSK](#)



Help with pain management is available at all Memorial Sloan Kettering locations, including the Josie Robertson Surgery Center.

At Memorial Sloan Kettering, we are committed to relieving suffering and improving quality of life for our patients. We do this by offering treatments to help control and manage pain throughout the course of cancer treatment.

## Leadership in Pain Management

Memorial Sloan Kettering was the first cancer center in the United States to have a service devoted to treating pain in people with cancer. Neurologist [Kathleen Foley](#) and her neurology and pharmacology colleagues at MSK and Weill Cornell Medical Center have performed groundbreaking scientific research in this field. Their work has greatly advanced the science of pain medicine. Now pain management is a priority in comprehensive cancer care.

A guiding principle at MSK is that access to pain relief is a basic human right. Fortunately, pain related to cancer can be managed effectively in most

people. Pain management is one part of a broad symptom-management approach for people at every stage of treatment. It includes the following:

## Constant Pain Monitoring

MSK nurses are trained in pain assessment and pain management. Patients in the hospital are asked every four hours whether they are experiencing pain. They are encouraged to report pain to their nurse or doctor whenever it occurs. Pain is rated by intensity on a scale of zero to ten. Every effort is made to provide painkilling treatments as needed.

## Help with Pain Care at Home

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### Supportive Care

At MSK, we are dedicated to providing supportive care for our patients throughout the course of treatment and beyond. This means we focus on physical, emotional, and spiritual needs both during and after cancer treatment.

[Learn more about supportive care at MSK. »](#)

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Hospital stays are usually short. People treated for cancer often have pain once they’ve returned home. The doctors and nurses in MSK’s outpatient clinics can help. We work with patients, caregivers, local doctors, and community pharmacists to control pain after patients leave the hospital.

For more than three decades, MSK has led the effort to develop guidelines for cancer pain management based on rigorous research. Our doctors helped create the World Health Organization’s three-step approach to cancer pain management. We also participated in establishing the US Agency for Health Care Policy and Research’s guidelines for the treatment of cancer pain. Both of these standards are supported by clinical studies.

## Investigational Approaches

MSK continues to contribute to the understanding and effective treatment of pain. This includes the following key research areas:

- identifying pain that’s specific to people with cancer
- tracing the neurologic root of pain, and the relationship of social and psychological factors with pain
- establishing accurate ways to assess pain
- matching the amount of treatment with the pain relief it provides

NEXT  
[Overview of Cancer Pain](#)

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[Locations](#)

APPOINTMENTS  
[800-525-2225](#)





## ▼ About MSK

[About us](#)

[Careers](#) ■

[Giving](#) ■

## ▼ Cancer Care

[Adult cancer types](#)

[Child & teen cancer types](#)

[Integrative medicine](#)

[Nutrition & cancer](#)

[Find a doctor](#)

## ▼ Research & Education

[Sloan Kettering Institute](#)

[Gerstner Sloan Kettering Graduate School](#) ■

[Graduate medical education](#)

[MSK Library](#) ■

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