



GW Cancer Center – Kidney Cancer Information

<https://cancercenter.gwu.edu/specialties/kidney-renal-cell-cancer>

Kidney Cancer

Kidney cancer (also called renal cell carcinoma or renal adenocarcinoma) is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells are found in the lining of tubules (very small tubes) in the kidney. There are 2 kidneys, one on each side of the backbone, above the waist. Tiny tubules in the kidneys filter and clean the blood. They take out waste products and make urine. The urine passes from each kidney through a long tube called a ureter into the bladder. The bladder holds the urine until it passes through the urethra and leaves the body.

There are three main types of kidney cancer. Renal cell cancer is the most common type in adults and Wilms tumors are the most common in children. Transitional cell carcinoma develops in the renal pelvis (the part of the kidney that collects urine and drains it to the ureters). The management of these types of kidney cancers are different.

Most kidney cancers are “sporadic,” meaning they are not hereditary. Smoking and being overweight are considered two of the risk factors for renal cell cancer. Having a family history of renal cell cancer and having certain genetic conditions, such as von Hippel-Lindau disease or Hereditary Papillary RCC increases the risk of developing renal cell carcinoma.

Most renal cell cancers are found incidentally, by imaging studies such as ultrasound, CT scan or MRI, performed for unrelated medical problems. Signs of renal cell cancer include blood in the urine and a lump in the abdomen. These and other signs and symptoms may be caused by renal cell cancer or by other conditions. There may be no signs or symptoms in the early stages. Signs and symptoms may appear as the tumor grows. These symptoms include pain in the side that doesn't go away, loss of appetite, weight loss for no known reason etc.

Surgery is the most important treatment for patients with kidney cancer. Sometimes small tumors may be watched without needing treatment, especially in older patients. This approach is called “active surveillance.” Other standard treatment modalities include targeted therapy, biologic/immune-therapy, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. New types of treatment are being tested in clinical trials. Patients may want to think about taking part in a clinical trial. Follow-up tests are usually needed since the cancer may come back. Recurrent renal cell cancer is cancer that has recurred (come back) after it has been treated. The cancer may come back many years after initial treatment, in the kidney or in other parts of the body.

The GW Cancer Center will provide you information to guide you in deciding which treatment pathway that is right for you. The treatment team uses a multidisciplinary approach involving Urologists, Medical Oncologists, Radiation Oncologists, and specialized Nurses to help you navigate the process. We offer the latest technologies to ensure superlative treatment of kidney cancer including minimally invasive surgery for localized disease and immunotherapy for advanced stage of disease. Depending upon your diagnosis and the size and location of the tumor, you may be a candidate for a minimally invasive surgical procedure called laparoscopic

or robotic nephrectomy. Our urologic surgeons have been performing this minimally invasive procedure since the early 1990s. Minimally invasive surgery can decrease your hospital stay, reduce the risk of infection, decrease pain and facilitate a faster recovery.

For those patients with advanced or metastatic disease or those who have progressed after conventional treatment we offer the opportunity to enroll in clinical trials to benefit from the latest developments in the field, especially immunotherapy.

Kidney Cancer Information Resources for Patients & their Families

NCCN Guidelines for Patients on Kidney Cancer:

<https://www.nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/kidney-patient.pdf>

Dr. Whalen's website: scroll down to Clinical Resources: <https://gwdocs.com/profile/michael-whalen>

Urology Care Foundation: <http://www.urologyhealth.org/urologic-conditions/kidney-cancer>

American Cancer Society: <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/kidneycancer/index>

American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO): <http://www.cancer.net/>

Clinical Trials Information

Clinical trials at GW Cancer Center: https://gwdocs.com/clinical-trials?field_specialties_target_id=178000041&combine=

GUMDROP (GenitoUrinary Multidisciplinary DC Regional Oncology Project): <http://www.gumdroptrials.org/kidney-cancer-trials/>

Clinical Trials at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH): <https://clinicaltrials.gov>

Specialized Cancer Testing & Imaging

(make this a separate tab under program information)