

Using Surgery for Cancer Treatment

Surgery can be used in several different ways during the care of a patient with cancer:

- **Surgery to diagnose cancer:** In some cases, surgery is performed to obtain a tumor sample, or biopsy, for diagnosing cancer.
- **Surgery to stage cancer:** Some cancer patients require surgery to determine how far the cancer has spread from the site of origin. This information is vital for establishing the best treatment plan for a patient.
- **Surgery to cure cancer:** If cancer is confined to one area of the body, sometimes surgery can be performed to remove the entire tumor.
- **Surgery to debulk a cancer:** If a tumor is extremely large and/or located very close to important organs or tissues, surgery may be recommended to remove only part of the tumor.
- **Surgery to ease problems caused by a cancer:** For patients with advanced cancer, surgery can sometimes be performed palliatively to remove tumors that are causing pain, pressure, or blockages.

Surgery for patients with cancer can be open or minimally invasive.

Open surgery is when a surgeon makes one or more large cuts to remove the tumor, some healthy tissue, and maybe some nearby lymph nodes.



Minimally invasive surgery is when a surgeon makes a few small cuts instead of one or more large ones. A long, thin tube with a tiny camera is inserted into one of the small cuts, allowing the surgeon to see what is happening, and special surgery tools are inserted through the other small cuts to remove the tumor and some healthy tissue surrounding the tumor.

