

Using Surgery for Cancer Treatment

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

- **Surgery to diagnose cancer** is performed to obtain a tumor sample for diagnosing cancer.
- **Surgery to stage cancer** is performed to determine how far the cancer has spread from the site of origin so that the best treatment plan can be developed for the patient.
- **Surgery to cure cancer** is performed to remove the entire tumor if cancer is confined to one area of the body.
- **Surgery to debulk cancer** is performed to remove only part of the tumor if it is very large and/or located very close to important organs or tissues.
- **Surgery to ease problems caused by cancer** is performed to remove tumors that are causing pain, pressure, or blockages in patients with advanced-stage cancer.

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 surrounding healthy tissue, and maybe some nearby lymph nodes.



Minimally invasive surgery is when a surgeon makes one or more small cuts to remove the tumor and some surrounding healthy tissue using special surgery tools with assistance from specialized devices, such as a long, thin tube with a tiny camera, that allow the surgeon to see what is happening.

