

Your Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer Care Team

Megan Hoang

Introduction

Non-melanoma skin cancer can require a multidisciplinary approach for comprehensive care. Within this care team, each member plays a distinct role, contributing expertise crucial to the patient's journey and treatment. If you're diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer, your care team may consist of the following healthcare professionals.

Dermatologist

A dermatologist is a doctor who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of skin conditions, from acne to skin cancer. They conduct skin exams to look for anything unusual. If they see anything suspicious for skin cancer, they may perform a biopsy by taking tissue samples from the area. Afterwards, your dermatologist will discuss the biopsy results and treatment options if you do have skin cancer, which may include topical therapies, excisional surgery, Mohs surgery, or radiation therapy, tailored to your condition and preferences. Your dermatologist may be able to treat your skin cancer in an outpatient setting.

Mohs Surgeon

A Mohs surgeon is a dermatologist with further training in Mohs surgery, which involves the precise removal of cancerous tissue while preserving healthy surrounding tissue. Mohs surgeons remove the tumor, act as the pathologist to examine the tissue, and can also perform reconstructive surgery. If your dermatologist isn't trained to perform Mohs surgery, and sees it as the most suitable treatment for you, you may need a Mohs surgeon.

Plastic Surgeon

A plastic surgeon reconstructs and repairs parts of the body through surgery. Plastic surgeons may be involved in your treatment if you need more extensive reconstructive surgery than what a dermatologist can offer in their office.

Oncologist

An oncologist is a doctor who diagnoses and treats cancer. Oncologists may help manage your case and work closely with you to come up with treatment plans.

A surgical oncologist treats and removes cancerous tumors that have spread beyond the skin with surgery. You may need one if your skin cancer has spread, such as to your lymph nodes.

A medical oncologist treats cancer, especially more advanced cancer, using specific medications. You may need an oncologist if you need chemotherapy, immunotherapy, or target therapy, either in addition to surgery or when surgery isn't possible.

A radiation oncologist uses high-energy rays or particles to destroy cancer cells. Radiation may be used in combination with other treatments or when surgery is not an ideal option for your skin cancer.

Nurse

Nurses can serve as your resource for any questions or concerns you have throughout your treatment, while also offering support and guidance. They assist in procedures, may give you treatments, provide emotional support to you and your loved ones, and act as liaisons between patients and other members of the care team.

Pathologist

Pathologists are doctors who work in labs to analyze tissue samples from biopsies or surgeries to confirm the diagnosis of non-melanoma skin cancer or determine the extent of the cancer. They provide detailed reports describing the tumor's characteristics. This information is crucial for determining the best treatment approach.

Radiologist

A radiologist is a doctor who orders, performs, and interprets imaging tests. They can identify areas of concern and determine if your non-melanoma skin cancer has spread, guiding further treatment decisions.

Social Worker

Social workers help with your practical needs, including accessing financial resources, navigating insurance coverage, connecting with support groups or community resources, and counseling.

Pharmacist

A pharmacist is a healthcare professional trained to prepare and distribute medication, as well as offer guidance on their correct usage and potential side effects. They may be part of your care team if you are prescribed medications for your non-melanoma skin cancer.