

## **Sarcoma - Kaposi - Diagnosis [1]**

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board \[2\]](#), 07/2014

**ON THIS PAGE:** You will find a list of the common tests, procedures, and scans that doctors can use to find out what's wrong and identify the cause of the problem. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

Doctors use many tests to diagnose cancer and find out if it has spread to another part of the body, called metastasis. Some tests may also determine which treatments may be the most effective. For most types of cancer, a biopsy is the only way to make a definitive diagnosis of cancer. If a biopsy is not possible, the doctor may suggest other tests that will help make a diagnosis. Imaging tests may be used to find out whether the cancer has spread. This list describes options for diagnosing this type of cancer, and not all tests listed will be used for every person. Your doctor may consider these factors when choosing a diagnostic test:

- Age and medical condition
- Type of cancer suspected
- Signs and symptoms
- Previous test results

In addition to a physical examination, the following tests may be used to diagnose Kaposi sarcoma:

**Biopsy [3].** A biopsy is the removal of a small amount of tissue for examination under a microscope. Other tests can suggest that cancer is present, but only a biopsy can make a definite diagnosis. The sample removed during the biopsy is analyzed by a pathologist. A pathologist is a doctor who specializes in interpreting laboratory tests and evaluating cells, tissues, and organs to diagnose disease.

To determine if Kaposi sarcoma has spread to internal organs, the doctor may perform the following examinations:

**X-ray.** An x-ray is a way to create a picture of the structures inside of the body using a small amount of radiation.

**Computed tomography (CT or CAT) scan [4].** A CT scan creates a three-dimensional picture of the inside of the body with an x-ray machine. A computer then combines these images into a

detailed, cross-sectional view that shows any abnormalities or tumors. CT scans of the chest and abdomen can help find cancer that has spread to the lungs, lymph nodes, or liver. A CT scan can also be used to measure the tumor's size. Sometimes, a special dye called a contrast medium is given before the scan to provide better detail on the image. This dye can be injected into a patient's vein or given as a liquid to swallow.

**Endoscopy** [5]. This test allows the doctor to see inside the body with a thin, lighted, flexible tube called an endoscope. The person may be sedated as the tube is inserted through the mouth, down the esophagus, and into the stomach and small bowel. Sedation is giving medication to become more relaxed, calm, or sleepy.

**Bronchoscopy.** Similar to an endoscopy, the doctor passes a thin, flexible tube with a light on the end into the mouth or nose, down through the windpipe, and into the breathing passages of the lungs. This procedure may be performed by a surgeon or a pulmonologist, which is a medical doctor who specializes in lung diseases. The tube lets the doctor see inside the lungs. Tiny tools inside the tube can gather samples of fluid and tissue and remove them so they can be examined by a pathologist. Patients are given mild anesthesia during a bronchoscopy. Anesthesia is medication to block the awareness of pain.

**Photography.** Because many skin lesions can develop in different parts of the body, doctors may regularly photograph parts of the skin, called mapping, to find out if new lesions have developed over time.

After diagnostic tests are done, your doctor will review all of the results with you. If the diagnosis is cancer, these results also help the doctor describe the cancer; this is called staging.

*The next section helps explain the different stages for this type of cancer. Use the menu on the side of your screen to select Stages, or you can select another section, to continue reading this guide.*

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/sarcoma-kaposi/diagnosis>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24406>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24486>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24511>