

[Home](#) > [Types of Cancer](#) > [Sarcoma - Kaposi](#) > [Sarcoma - Kaposi - Diagnosis](#)

PDF generated on July 30, 2016 from <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/sarcoma-kaposi/diagnosis>

Sarcoma - Kaposi - Diagnosis [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 03/2016

ON THIS PAGE: You will find a list of common tests, procedures, and scans that doctors use to find the cause of a medical problem. To see other pages, use the menu.

Doctors use many tests to find, or diagnose, cancer. They also do tests to learn if cancer has spread to another part of the body from where it started. If this happens, it is called metastasis. For example, imaging tests can show if the cancer has spread. Imaging tests show pictures of the inside of the body. Doctors may also do tests to learn which treatments could work best.

For most types of cancer, a biopsy is the only sure way for the doctor to know whether an area of the body has cancer. In a biopsy, the doctor takes a small sample of tissue for testing in a laboratory. If a biopsy is not possible, the doctor may suggest other tests that will help make a diagnosis.

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:

- The type of cancer suspected
- Your signs and symptoms
- Your age and medical condition
- The results of earlier medical tests

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

- **Biopsy.** A [biopsy](#) [3] 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. A pathologist then analyzes the sample(s). 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.** A [CT scan](#) [4] creates a 3-dimensional picture of the inside of the body using x-rays taken from different angles. A computer then combines these images into a detailed, cross-sectional view that shows any abnormalities or tumors. 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 pill to swallow.
- **Endoscopy.** [An endoscopy](#) [5] 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. A pulmonologist 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 for examination 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. This is called mapping. It is done 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 in this guide is Stages](#) [6]. It explains the system doctors use to describe the extent of the disease. Or, use the menu to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

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>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/18961>