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Our physicians collaborate with diagnostic and interventional radiologists, gastroenterologists, and pathologists to provide the most expert care available. Our diagnostic imaging services, including Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), MRI/MRCP, and high-resolution CT scans, Endoscopic ultrasound (EUS), and EUS-guided fine needle aspiration, allow for patients to be properly evaluated at the onset of their diagnosis.

Each year, nearly 300,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with a type of gastrointestinal cancer. Many of these cancers are too complex or difficult to be treated with just one type of treatment. Within our multidisciplinary Gastrointestinal Cancers Program, our physicians are dedicated to providing the most up-to-date and effective care to gastrointestinal cancer patients, advancing the nation’s understanding of cancer, and improving diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. Clinical trials are often available for patients who are newly diagnosed or who are not responding to their current treatment.
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HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

For more information or to schedule an appointment with a member of the Gastrointestinal Cancers Program, please contact our patient intake coordinators at (203) 200-4422. They will provide you with assistance during your diagnosis, treatment, and recovery and our nurse coordinator can help answer questions that you may have. Our goal is to ensure that each patient has an outstanding and positive cancer care experience. When you call, a patient intake coordinator will help to arrange your appointments so that you will see all of the specialists needed during an initial visit.
SURGICAL ONCOLOGY

Surgery is used in the management of several types of gastrointestinal cancers, including malignant and premalignant tumors arising in the stomach, liver, bile ducts, pancreas, small intestine, and colorectum. It may be necessary to see a thoracic surgeon in the treatment of certain tumors arising in the esophagus. Our surgical outcomes are among the top tier in the United States, including low surgical morbidity, short hospital length of stay, and excellent cancer outcomes. Our team of surgeons is dedicated to providing the best oncologic surgery, while integrating state-of-the-art surgical techniques and minimally invasive procedures when possible. These include:

• Laparoscopic and robotic surgery: Performed for stomach, small bowel, and colorectal tumors as well as for primary and metastatic liver cancers and biliary tumors.
• Cytoreduction and heated intraperitoneal chemotherapy
• Pancreatectomy (Whipple procedure, distal pancreatectomy, total pancreatectomy, central pancreatectomy, pancreatectomy preserving anulation): These are complex operations to remove the head of the pancreas (Whipple) and the laparoscopic distal pancreatectomy, often done laparoscopically, is used for tumors of the pancreatic body and tail. Our surgeons have over 30 years of experience in pancreatic surgery and are among the highest volume centers for pancreatic surgery both in Connecticut and the United States.

MEDICAL ONCOLOGY

Our medical oncology program provides experience and knowledge of innovative treatment options and investigational therapies. Treatment plans include chemotherapy, targeted biologic therapies, and immunotherapy. Clinical trials investigating immunotherapy, combinations, and molecular targeted therapies are also available.

• Targeted Therapy: A special type of chemotherapy that targets the changes in cancer cells that help them grow, divide, and spread.
• Immunotherapy: Using one’s own immune system to find and destroy cancer cells.

Yale Cancer Center emphasizes the importance of clinical trials and continually strives to provide our patients with the most current therapies. In close collaboration with basic scientists, clinical research is focused on developing innovative strategies to help eliminate, control, and palliate tumors in patients. We perform state-of-the-art genomic profiling and laboratory explorations to determine the biologic therapies are also available.

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RADIATION ONCOLOGY

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• Three-dimensional Conformal Radiation: Based on the shape and location of your tumor, this technique may be used to target radiation to your tumor, by matching the shape of your tumor.
• Four-dimensional CT simulation: This imaging technique makes CT scans faster and more accurate. 4D CT uses a new technology that captures the location and movement of your tumor and the movement of your body’s organs over time to more accurately treat your tumor.
• Stereotactic body radiotherapy (SIBRT): A non-invasive technique used to provide extremely high doses of radiation with a high level of accuracy, resulting in less radiation delivered to surrounding tissue and fewer side effects.

GENETIC TESTING AND COUNSELING

Our multidisciplinary team of genetic counselors, nurse practitioners, and physicians will work together with you to create a personalized care plan. The Colon Cancer Genes and Prevention Program provides comprehensive risk assessment, education, and screening for patients found to be at increased risk of colon cancer. Individuals with a strong family history of colorectal or gastric cancer, a genetic predisposition such as an inherited mutation in Lynch Syndrome or other colon cancer-related genes, and a significant history of colon polyps may be at risk.

SPECIALTIES

The Gastrointestinal Cancers Program includes several specialty services, including an Advanced Endoscopy Team at Smilow Cancer Hospital focused on diseases of the pancreas, biliary tree, and the gastrointestinal tract. Patients with a variety of symptoms and diseases are evaluated and monitored, including those with pancreatitis, biliary strictures and stones, post-cholecystectomy complications, unexplained abdominal pain, and suspected gastrointestinal malignancies.

Our Interventional Oncology Program offers cutting edge specialized services to patients at Smilow. A team of dedicated and committed professionals with the highest level of expertise in interventional oncology offer image-guided therapies for patients with liver and colorectal cancers. In addition, Interventional Oncology provides a range of therapeutic options used for palliative care including biopsy, vascular port, and chemotherapy catheter placement, and variety therapies for pain relief.
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SUPPORTIVE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Smilow Cancer Hospital places great emphasis on taking care of all our patients’ needs with the best medical care available and a network of supportive care services. Advanced practice nurses with dedicated knowledge and skills related to the treatment of gastrointestinal cancers are available to care for patients throughout the continuum of their illness. Patients and their families are also provided with access to social workers to ensure psychosocial support during their treatment. Our support group is led by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and offers patients an opportunity to connect with other patients and share their story in a friendly and welcoming environment. Other available resources for our patients and their families include nutritional counseling, physical therapy, art therapy, and pastoral support.

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For Paul's story: yalecancercenter.org/paul

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For Jean's story: yalecancercenter.org/jean