

A close-up photograph of two people shaking hands. The person on the left is wearing a white lab coat with a stethoscope around their neck. The person on the right is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The hands are clasped together in a firm grip. The background is a plain, light color.

## **Understanding and Building Your aMTC Medical Team**

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If you've been diagnosed with advanced Medullary Thyroid Cancer (aMTC), you may have questions about your disease.

Ultimately, your medical team is your best resource to help manage your disease, but the challenge is figuring out which health care professionals (HCPs) can or should be part of your team.

**This resource is intended to help you with this process and give you the information you need to advocate for your own care.** Below you will find an overview of potential healthcare professionals and their individual roles, as well as suggestions for finding doctors and key questions to ask when building your team.





# Choosing Your Medical Team

## Finding Your Medical Team

The first step in choosing a medical team is finding the right doctors to support your journey. There are many resources you can tap into as you go through this process, including:

- Talking to the doctor, or primary care physician, who diagnosed you
- Using a doctor locator/oncologist directory (AMA, ASCO)
- Contacting your local cancer centers
- Asking for referrals in your social circle
- Asking your insurance plan for referrals of doctors in-network



# Choosing Your Medical Team

## Selecting Your Medical Team

As you work with your doctor to begin the process of selecting your medical team, you will want to ask questions to gauge your doctor's familiarity with a rare disease such as aMTC. Initial questions you may want to ask include:

- What is your certification, specialty and subspecialty?
- How long have you been practicing medicine?
- How long have you been treating patients with aMTC?
- How many patients with aMTC have you treated?
- What hospitals are you affiliated with?
  - Do these hospitals have resources to treat patients with aMTC? What are they?
  - Would you recommend any of these for me?
- How many aMTC surgeries do you perform in a year?
- Who else would you recommend to be on my medical team and why?



# Choosing Your Medical Team

## Medical Team Members May Include:

### **General practitioner**

Often, your family physician will be the first health care professional you consult about unusual or persistent symptoms. Your general practitioner may refer you to a specialist.

### **Endocrinologist**

An endocrinologist is a specially trained doctor with basic training in Internal Medicine, focused on conditions related to hormones and the glands. Endocrinologists are able to diagnose and treat hormone imbalances and problems by helping to restore the normal balance of hormones in the body. The thyroid is one of the organs that endocrinologists specialize in, because it controls important bodily functions, such as heart rate, blood pressure and metabolism.

### **Medical oncologist**

The medical oncologist is a specialist who diagnoses and treats cancer using a variety of medical interventions. A medical oncologist may be your main HCP during treatment, and can help coordinate treatment given by other specialists.

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# Choosing Your Medical Team

## Medical Team Members May Include:

### **Surgeon**

The surgeon's focus is to remove as much of the cancer as possible. For some patients, surgery may not be an option.

### **Nurse**

An oncology nurse is a nurse who specializes in caring for people living with cancer. You can rely on your nurse to work directly with you to explain medical information, monitor your physical condition.

### **Radiologist**

Radiologists are medical doctors who use medical imaging (pictures), such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computerized tomography or computerized axial tomography (CT/CAT) scans to diagnose medical conditions including cancer.

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# Choosing Your Medical Team

## Medical Team Members May Include:

### **Mental health professional**

Coping with aMTC may be challenging for you and your loved ones. Mental health professionals specialize in the stress of being diagnosed and living with a chronic illness which may be contributing factors to developing conditions including depression and anxiety. Your medical oncologist may be able to refer you to someone in this field.

### **Genetic expert**

A genetic expert focuses on identifying genetic risk factors and potential for developing diseases. Not all patients will have this professional as part of their medical team. This health care professional gathers information about patients and family members to make recommendations for genetic testing that may identify a genetic predisposition for developing certain types of cancers. If you have already received a cancer diagnosis, treatments may be identified based on your genetic information.



## After You Have Selected Your Medical Team

### A Few Important Steps

Once your medical team is in place, there are a few important steps to take to develop a good relationship and make sure they are working together in a way that works best for you to manage and advocate for your care.

- 1 Build a relationship with your team and identify a primary point of contact. Good communication with your medical team is essential to receiving the best care.
- 2 Determine how much you want to know throughout the journey, and talk to your doctor about what type of information is important for you to share with your team.

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## After You Have Selected Your Medical Team

### A Few Important Steps

#### Some things to keep in mind:

- Tell your doctor about any changes in your body or reactions you are having
- Ask your doctor which changes would require immediate attention versus those that can be addressed during regular hours
- Be honest about your habits
- Do not be afraid to talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns
- 3** Get a second opinion. As with many major decisions in life, you may want to get a second opinion on what the best course is for you. Be sure to ask that your medical records be shared with the new doctor or bring your own copies on the day of the visit.
- 4** **For additional questions to ask your medical team, please see the Questions to Ask resources available at [aMTCSupport.com](http://aMTCSupport.com)**