

UCLA Breast Center at Santa Monica



This year, more than 230,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in the United States, making it the second-leading cause of cancer death in women after lung cancer. While treatment advances and earlier detection through screening have caused breast cancer deaths to decline steadily since 1989, women are still understandably frightened when they or their physician discover a suspicious lump. With the rise in breast cancer awareness, more information about the disease and treatment options are available online and in the community than ever before. Yet, women and men newly diagnosed with breast cancer often feel overwhelmed when faced with personal decisions about their care.

UCLA center is one of few in nation with patient navigator

Launched in June 2012, the UCLA Breast Center at Santa Monica is one of only a handful in the nation that employ a patient navigator who gathers medical reports, coordinates appointments, answers questions and serves as the patient's single point of contact for the healthcare team.

"The healthcare system can be really confusing and hard to navigate for patients, especially when they're feeling shell-shocked with a new diagnosis," says Nova Foster, MD, the center's breast surgeon. "The patient navigator is there to facilitate and guide them through the process so they don't have to struggle to figure it out on their own."

Patients who come to the center meet with a multidisciplinary team of physicians including a medical oncologist, breast surgeon, reconstructive surgeon, radiation oncologist and psycho-social counselor. A genetic counselor is also available for consultation. Patients receive a coordinated plan of care as well as a surgery date — if indicated — by the end of their first appointment.

UCLA Breast Center at Santa Monica offers unique approach

As one of the nation's leading research and treatment centers, the UCLA Breast Center at Santa Monica offers a streamlined approach that allows newly diagnosed patients to see the entire team of specialists in one day. With the help of a patient navigator, patients gain a deeper understanding of their diagnosis, and will have a plan of care and even a surgery date, if appropriate, by the end of their first visit. The one-day approach benefits patients in many ways. When presented with authoritative information about their disease in a timely manner, patients experience less anxiety and are able to focus their energies on getting well. Patients also benefit from the convenience of the one-day model, especially those who travel long distances — including from other states — to receive treatment at our center. As part of a world-class research and teaching institution, we can also offer patients the opportunity to participate in cutting-edge clinical trials aimed at improving breast cancer diagnosis, treatment, care and prevention.

Breast Center has a multidisciplinary team of board-certified specialists

At the core of the UCLA Breast Center at Santa Monica is a multidisciplinary team of physicians and surgeons who are all board-certified in their fields. Our physicians are experts in breast surgery, plastic surgery, radiology, radiation oncology, medical oncology and pathology and have vast experience in advanced diagnostic and treatment techniques not typically offered in other healthcare settings. Our reconstructive surgeons, for instance, achieve excellent outcomes with autologous breast reconstruction, a surgery technique that uses a patient's own tissue from elsewhere in the body to create a new breast. Team members meet regularly to develop personalized and integrated plans of care for their patients. The team also includes a genetic counselor and a psychosocial counselor.

Patient navigator enhances patient experience

Our patient navigator is a defining feature of The UCLA Breast Center in Santa Monica that significantly enhances the patient experience. Our patient navigator, who is trained in breast cancer care, guides and supports patients through their diagnosis, treatment and care at the breast center and serves as their liaison to the healthcare team. With extensive knowledge of the complexities of the healthcare system, our patient navigator acts as an advocate and point of contact for our patients, collecting medical records, coordinating appointments and answering questions. The patient navigator is there to alleviate anxiety so patients can concentrate on their recovery.

Participating Physicians

Nicole Dawson, MD

Pathology

Nova Foster, MD

Breast Surgery

Anne Hoyt, MD

Radiology

Sara Hurvitz, MD

Medical Oncology

Susan McCloskey, MD, MSHS

Radiation Oncology

Charles Tseng, MD

Plastic Surgery

Contact Information

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