Patients with a new diagnosis of ‘renal mass’ may meet several physicians with different but similar sounding specialties.

Here’s a quick list of physicians often on the kidney cancer oncology team.

A Urologist is a doctor who specializes in treating diseases of the urinary system. This is usually the first doctor a patient with a new renal mass will be referred to. The urologist is typically the gatekeeper for referral to oncology care for patients with mass suspicious for renal cancer.

A Urologic Oncologist, is a urologist who has special training in diagnosing and treating cancers of the urinary tract, including surgical options. A urologic oncologist has a deep specialization in managing kidney cancer.

A Medical Oncologist has specialized training in using drugs to treat cancer. Some medical oncologists specialize in genitourinary cancers. Some are particularly interested in kidney cancer and in offering kidney cancer clinical trials to their patients. Patients whose cancer has spread beyond the kidney will usually be referred to a medical oncologist.

A Radiation Oncologist has special training in using radiation to treat cancer. While radiation is not standard for all kidney cancer patients, some whose cancer has spread will have a referral to a radiation oncologist to help with control of a difficult or painful area.