

Cardio-Oncology

What is cardio-oncology?

Cardio-oncology is a new area within cardiology that is focused on **heart and blood vessel disease in patients with cancer**. Our goal is for patients to receive the best cancer treatment possible while protecting the heart from potential side effects of chemotherapy. Partnership with oncology is an essential component of cardio-oncology care.



Who needs to see a cardio-oncologist?

• Patients on High-Risk Cancer Therapy

Some cancer treatments have unintended heart-related side effects such as weakness of the heart muscle (“heart failure” or “cardiomyopathy”), heart rhythm problems, or high blood pressure. A cardio-oncologist helps you **lower the risk of developing heart problems while undergoing cancer therapy and treats these problems when they arise**. A cardio-oncologist works with your cancer doctor to make sure that your heart is ready for cancer treatment.

• Cancer Survivors

In some cases, damage caused by cancer therapies occurs many years after finishing cancer treatment. A cardio-oncologist can **run tests on cancer survivors to check on heart health**. A cardio-oncologist can also talk to you about ways to lower your risk of heart disease, given your cancer treatment history.

• Heart Patients Who Are Being Treated for Cancer

A cardio-oncologist is trained to manage **heart problems in patients who are undergoing cancer treatment**. Many side effects of cancer treatment (such as low blood counts, low or high blood pressure, and fluid retention) can directly affect the ways in which heart problems are treated (such as the use of blood-thinning medications, blood pressure medicines, and water pills). A cardio-oncologist is familiar with cancer treatment regimens and adapts to them when deciding on heart treatment strategies.



What if I already have a cardiologist?

Many patients have regular cardiologists who they’ve known and trusted for years. In general, **regular cardiologists are not familiar with new cancer treatments and their heart-related side effects**. Additionally, it can be difficult for your cancer doctor to communicate with your regular cardiologist about time-sensitive medical questions if they are in separate medical systems.

Many patients see a cardio-oncologist while they are getting cancer treatment and then return to their regular cardiologists once cancer treatment is completed. This way, your cancer doctor can be sure that your heart is ready for cancer therapy and that any necessary heart-related precautions have been taken. The cardio-oncology and cancer doctors at UT Southwestern Simmons Cancer Center are in close communication, which ensures that your cancer treatment stays on schedule.



What will happen at my visit with the cardio-oncologist?

During your visit, the cardio-oncologist will **review your cancer and heart-related medical history and ask you about symptoms of heart disease**. Chest pain, shortness of breath, swelling of your legs, and fatigue are potential signs of a developing heart problem.

After the visit, **additional heart testing may be ordered**. These may include electrocardiography (EKG), echocardiography (heart ultrasound), stress testing, heart MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), and/or Holter monitoring. These tests check on the heart's pumping function, blood flow to the heart, and for heart rhythm problems. **Blood work** may also be ordered to check for signs of heart disease or high cholesterol.

Finally, the cardio-oncologist will talk to you about **strategies to protect your heart health**, including lifestyle changes with diet and exercise.



Where are cardio-oncology services offered?

Our cardio-oncology team sees patients at:



**Cardio-Oncology Program at
UT Southwestern Simmons Cancer Center**
2001 Inwood Road, 3rd Floor
Dallas, TX 75390



**UT Southwestern Monty and Tex Moncrief
Medical Center at Fort Worth**
600 South Main Street
Fort Worth, TX 76104

For appointments, please call **214-645-4673** and choose option 2.

Visit utswmed.org/cardio-onc to learn more about our team, or scan this QR code.

