

CONTENTS

Staging Kidney Cancer

Staging, the process of finding how far the cancer has spread, guides treatment decisions for kidney cancer.

The lower the stage, the better the prognosis. Within each stage are further distinctions for the tumor, involvement of lymph nodes and metastases.

Stage 1: The cancer is found only in the kidney and measures 7 centimeters or smaller.

Stage 2: Still considered an early stage, the cancer is limited to the kidney but measures larger than 7 centimeters.

Stage 3: The cancer has either invaded one nearby lymph node or the fatty tissue surrounding the kidney and/or major nearby veins, such as the renal vein. In 23 percent of cases, the kidney tumor extends into the renal vein and blocks the blood flow away from the kidney, resulting in renal vein thrombosis.

Stage 4: The cancer has spread to more than one lymph node, nearby organs, such as the bowel or pancreas, or to other parts of the body, such as the lungs.