



Contact us
 Call the Nurse Coordinator on 6151 0860
 Email us at: wakmas@perkins.org.au
 Fax: 6151 1032



Information for patients



Government of **Western Australia**
 Department of Health





About melanoma

Melanoma is a type of cancer that forms in pigment cells (melanocytes). Normal melanocytes produce melanin to help protect the skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight. Melanoma occurs if these cells become cancerous. Melanoma is the third most common cancer diagnosed in Australia.

A melanoma diagnosis can be overwhelming, but it is important that you learn as much about your diagnosis as possible so that you can contribute to your treatment plan.

How we help

The Western Australian Kirkbride Melanoma Advisory Service (WAKMAS) was established to provide information and advice to you and your doctor about your melanoma and its management. Every person is unique and every melanoma case is different, so you may need to consult a number of different specialists. WAKMAS involves a panel of medical experts, who assess melanoma cases in detail and develop a personalised treatment plan for each patient.

Services offered

The WAKMAS panel is made up of specialists in the areas of anatomical pathology, dermatology, plastic surgery, general surgery, medical oncology and nuclear physicians.

The service also includes a team of medical scientists, who research the genetic and environmental causes of melanoma and investigate new treatments. Information obtained from the assessment of your melanoma could be used to develop new drugs to fight melanoma in the future.

Clinic Review

Some patients are reviewed in the WAKMAS clinic, located within the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research at QEII (see map on the back of this brochure). At the appointment you will be reviewed by a team of specialist being a Dermatologist, Plastic Surgeon and Medical Oncologist. One of the WAKMAS nursing team will also be present during your appointment.

Other patients may be seen as a WAKMAS external clinic review, involves you being seen by one of our specialists who will then present your case to a larger team of specialists for consensus of your management plan. If the team recommend review by another WAKMAS specialist then this will be discussed with you and arrangements will be made.

Your pathology slides will have been reviewed and assessed prior to your appointment by one of our specialist pathologists and the panel will have these results to discuss with you. An appropriate plan of management will be formulated from the examination by the WAKMAS specialist (s) with the pathology review and any other results.

Following your appointment, a panel of WAKMAS specialists (15-25 doctors) will meet and discuss your case in more detail. If further recommendations arise from this meeting, you and your doctor will both be contacted.

You do not need to see the consultant allocated by WAKMAS for definitive treatment privately, as different consultants have different fee structures. You can ask your GP or WAKMAS to refer you elsewhere or request definitive treatment through the public system.

Treatment plan

Your referring doctor will be contacted and provided with the suggested management plan. Please note that WAKMAS is only an advisory service and does not provide treatment for your melanoma (unless specifically asked to do this by your doctor). If your referring doctor has requested management be arranged, then WAKMAS will refer you to the appropriate doctor in either the public or private health system.

Can I bring someone with me?

You are most welcome to bring a relative, partner or friend along with you when you attend the clinic and they may be present for as much of the consultation as you wish.