



Every cancer. Every life.™

How to Choose a Cancer Center or Hospital

If you or someone you care for has been told they have cancer, you'll want to find the best medical care and treatment. Choosing a cancer center may be one of your most important decisions.

Here is a list of questions you may want to ask when looking for a cancer center. If you have already found a cancer doctor, make sure they work at the center you prefer. Also make sure that the cancer center accepts your health insurance. If you'd like to learn more, visit our [Where to Find Cancer Care](#) page on [cancer.org](#).

Here is some information you may want to gather as you look for the cancer center that best meets your needs.

Cancer center name: _____

Address/location: _____

Contact information: _____

Questions to ask

Does the cancer center offer (or have easy access to) all the services you might need for your cancer?

Although you may not need all of them, it can be helpful to find out what services the cancer center offers.

- Outpatient infusion or treatment center
- Radiation oncology department
- Inpatient cancer care
- Specialty center or doctor who focuses on your type of cancer
- Tumor board meetings where different types of cancer experts plan the care of a person with cancer
- Pharmacy services
- Social support services, including a social worker and chaplain or pastoral care
- Palliative care or symptom management services
- Patient navigation services
- Financial assistance services
- Nutritional support, such as a dietitian or nutritionist
- Rehabilitation services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapy
- Survivorship program or clinic
- Complementary and integrative care services
- Lodging options for patients who live out of town
- Diagnostic lab services
- Diagnostic radiology services
- Pathology lab service
- Blood bank
- Emergency or urgent care services
- Intensive care unit

Is the cancer center or hospital accredited by The Joint Commission?

The Joint Commission accredits and certifies healthcare organizations based on a set of quality measures. You can find reports about the quality and safety of accredited organizations at [qualitycheck.org](https://www.qualitycheck.org).

Does this cancer center participate in any cancer quality programs?

- Is the cancer center accredited by the Commission on Cancer (CoC) program of the American College of Surgeons?

If the cancer center is accredited by the CoC, you know it meets certain quality standards and offers a range of cancer care services. You can find an accredited cancer center at [facs.org](https://www.facs.org).

- Is the center a designated National Cancer Institute Cancer Center?

The National Cancer Institute Cancer Centers program supports research-oriented institutions that are known for their scientific excellence and cutting-edge treatments. You can learn more about NCI Cancer Centers at [cancer.gov](https://www.cancer.gov).

What is the reputation of the cancer center or hospital?

Ask your friends and family, especially any nurses or doctors who work in your community.

What types of healthcare professionals are part of the facility's cancer care team?

It is helpful to have a variety of professionals involved in your care, such as nurses, social workers, pharmacists, and navigators. Find out what staff will be available to help meet your needs.

Is there a cancer care infusion center or unit where specially trained nurses care for people with cancer?

Will I see the same staff members on each visit?

Is the staff friendly, helpful, and willing to answer my questions in a friendly, understandable way?

Is the facility clean and well-maintained?

How comfortable and private are the patient rooms and treatment areas?

Where can you use your cell phone?

What's the cancer center's visiting policy?

Is this a teaching hospital? If so, how will that affect who I see if I'm in the hospital?

If you need to learn more about where to find cancer care, please call the American Cancer Society at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.

