



YOUR GUIDE TO SECOND OPINIONS

When you hear the words “you have cancer,” it can feel overwhelming. With so many questions and decisions to make, it can be difficult to process or consider options. Getting a second opinion can provide reassurance you’re getting the best care possible. This guide can help you prepare for and navigate that process.

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To learn more about second opinions from a cancer sub-specialist focused on your type of cancer, visit parkview.com/SecondOpinions



PARKVIEW
CANCER INSTITUTE

PRIOR TO SCHEDULING

There are some things that you can do prior to scheduling a second opinion appointment to help organize the process so you feel more prepared and in control.

Pre-scheduling checklist

- Contact your health insurance provider** to determine your coverage. Many insurance companies will cover second opinions. Find out if you will need a referral or if coverage includes self-referrals.
- Compile a list of physicians** you have seen, tests or imaging that has been done and procedures you may have already had. This information will make it easier to gather relevant medical records and should result in less repeat testing, unless it is deemed necessary.
- Talk to your current doctor** about getting a second opinion.
- Do your research.** You can learn of providers or cancer centers online, from friends or family, or from your other medical providers.
- Choose where you would like to go** for your second opinion. This choice is personal, and there are many factors to consider, including: recommendation, reputation, affiliation, specialization and range of services. You may have interest in a specific clinical trial or a unique offering such as symptom management that is available from a particular location or provider.



Parkview Cancer Institute accepts self-referrals.

Call 833-724-8326 to get started!

Start the Conversation: How to talk to your doctor

Second opinions are common, and your physician should support your decision to get one. After all, they want you to have the best care possible and the assurance needed to confidently move forward in your cancer journey. Chances are good that your provider gives second opinions to others as well.

You don't need to hide the fact that you are seeking a second opinion. Seeking one has become a normal part of the cancer journey for many people. Your physician will be a part of the process by providing your medical records and test results. They may even recommend where you should seek your second opinion!

Conversation starters:

- With my diagnosis, I want to make sure I am fully informed of all my options by getting a second opinion.
- I would like to do my research by getting a second opinion before committing to a treatment plan.
- If you or a close family member had my diagnosis, who would you recommend for a second opinion?
- I'm thinking of getting a second opinion for reassurance that my treatment plan is appropriate. Is there someone you would recommend I see?
- I hear a lot about second opinions and think getting one would be of value for me.

If you have another doctor in mind, it's okay to ask for a referral to see that specific person or cancer center.

WHEN SCHEDULING YOUR SECOND OPINION

At this point, you have chosen your second opinion provider. Be sure to gain a full understanding of their second opinion process.

Appointment scheduling checklist

- **Discuss your health insurance coverage.** *Parkview Cancer Institute has financial counselors who can work with you to determine your costs regardless of coverage.*
- **Find out if the cancer center providing the second opinion obtains your medical records** or if that is something expected of you. *Parkview Cancer Institute removes the leg work for our second opinion patients by collecting all relevant medical information prior to their visit.*
- **Have your list of physicians, labs and procedural centers** that you have been to so far. If the cancer center will be obtaining your records, they will need this information.
- **Confirm whether you need a referral.** If so, make a note to get one prior to your appointment. *Parkview Cancer Institute accepts self-referrals.*
- **Ask if visitor restrictions are in place** or if you are able to bring someone with you to your appointment. *Since situations change quickly with COVID-19, you may want to verify this when you receive your appointment reminder.*
- **If you are interested in the possibility of a virtual appointment, this is the time to ask if one is possible.** The availability of virtual visits may be impacted by your location, your specific cancer or other variables.
- **If a virtual visit is an option for you, find out details on the specific app or platform** used for this type of visit so that you will have access and be familiar with it prior to your appointment.
- **If you are traveling for your second opinion,** the cancer center can provide you with information on recommended lodging in the area.
- **Find out what to expect:** how to find the building and office, availability of parking, the number of people you will meet with, how long the appointment may last, etc. Knowing these details can help you better manage your day's schedule and reduce any anxiety about the appointment.
- **Breathe.** You're one step closer to making an informed decision to help ensure you're getting the best care possible.

Tips and Tricks

- A lot of information will be shared during your appointment, and it can be difficult to remember everything discussed. It's a good idea to bring someone with you who can listen, take notes and ask clarifying questions.
- Write down questions you may have ahead of time, so you don't forget to ask them.
- If visitor restrictions don't allow you to bring someone to your appointment, ask if you can have a friend or family member join the appointment via a conference call app. The extra support could make you more comfortable, and a second set of ears is always helpful.
- Ask if you can record the conversation. Most smartphones have a voice recorder, and it may be easier to take notes of the important parts when you can pause the recording.
- During your consultation, the oncologist will ask you about your medical history. Write down anything that comes to mind prior to the appointment that you want to be sure you mention.
- The oncologist may have questions about medications or supplements that you take. Bring them with you or take pictures of the labels on your phone rather than try to remember what they are on the spot.

DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT

During your appointment you will have the opportunity to ask questions about the recommended care plan. Spend some time prior to this appointment thinking about what is important to you in terms of your cancer journey. Make sure that those topics are discussed so that you have a good feel for how the cancer center will meet those needs. Some questions to consider are:

- What is my diagnosis? Does it differ from my original diagnosis?
- If the diagnosis or staging is different, how did you come to your conclusion?
- What was the process that lead to the recommended treatment plan?
- What are the benefits to the recommended treatment plan?
- What can I expect in terms of side effects?
- Will I be able to continue with my normal activities during treatment?
- What services do you offer to help reduce side effects?
- Are there any clinical trials that I should consider?
- What other support services would be available to me?
- How soon should I start treatment?
- What services do you offer once my treatment plan is complete?
- As I decide on who to choose for my care, how can I contact you or your team if I have more questions?

Pandemic Considerations

Parkview Cancer Institute is taking extra precautions to limit your risk of exposure to COVID-19. We recognize that cancer patients may be at an immunocompromised state. From visitor restrictions to enhanced cleaning protocols, we are doing all we can to set your mind at ease, including:

- Screening prior to appointments and upon arrival.
- Social distancing in all areas.
- A dedicated fever clinic which allows patients with fever from coronavirus, cancer or cancer treatment to continue to receive the treatment they need.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures.
- Providing masks to patients who need one upon entering the building.
- Staff use of appropriate PPE at all times.
- Leveraging telemedicine to allow patients virtual visits with their care team for select appointments.

COMPARING YOUR OPTIONS

As you move toward choosing a cancer center or provider, take the time to absorb all the factors you may consider as part of your decision. Since cancer treatment often requires frequent appointments, many individuals find it relevant to assess services and comforts extending beyond the treatment plan. Some questions to ask yourself:

- Did the staff and providers at the cancer center make you feel welcome and comfortable?
- Do the physicians specialize in and treat only your type of cancer?
- Did you feel like the proposed treatment plan was well thought out?
- Is there someone who will provide care navigation throughout your cancer journey?
- Will all your appointments be in the same location?
- Is palliative oncology available for symptom management?
- Does the cancer center have a holistic approach to cancer treatment?
- Is financial counseling available?
- Is spiritual support available?
- Is genetic testing and counseling an option?
- Are dietitians specializing in cancer available?
- Did you feel as if family and/or caregiver involvement was important?
- Is treatment and diagnostic equipment state-of-the-art?
- Are there safety protocols related to COVID-19 in place?
- Will the oncologists communicate with your primary care or other healthcare providers to ensure seamless care coordination?
- Was the facility comfortable and inviting?
- Does the center offer personalized surveillance plans after treatment completion?



To learn about the Parkview Cancer Institute difference, visit parkview.com/Cancer