



## How to choose a hospital - Worksheet

If you have been told you have cancer, your next step is to make sure you get the best possible medical care and treatment. Choosing a hospital is one of your most important decisions. Here are some questions to ask as you look for a hospital that meets your needs. If you have already chosen a doctor, it is important that he or she be able to use, or have admitting privileges at the hospital you choose. It is also important that your health insurance be accepted there. To learn more, please see our document *Choosing a Doctor and Hospital*.

**Hospital name:**

**Address/location:**

### **Does The Joint Commission accredit the hospital?**

The Joint Commission is an independent non-profit organization which evaluates and accredits many health care organizations in the United States, including hospitals. The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval Quality Check includes Quality Reports, which give you information about the quality and safety of accredited organizations. You can get these reports online at [www.qualitycheck.org](http://www.qualitycheck.org), or by calling 630-792-5800.

### **Does the hospital offer services you may need at some point during the cancer experience?**

(Check off the services the hospital offers)

Pathology lab

Diagnostic lab

Blood bank

24-hour doctor staffing

Tumor board A tumor board is made up of experts from different cancer care disciplines. It meets regularly to discuss individual cases and look at ways to give the best available care. Patients are not charged for this consultation process.

Social services department

Respiratory therapy department

Rehabilitation services department

Advanced diagnostic equipment (examples: MRI, CT, and PET scans)

Advanced treatment equipment (examples: laser treatments, radiation therapy equipment)

Intensive care unit

Transplant unit

Emergency room

Outpatient infusion center

Anesthesiologists

Find out if the hospital is part of one of these cancer quality programs.

**Does the Commission on Cancer (CoC) program of the American College of Surgeons approve the hospital as one that is committed to provide the best available cancer diagnosis and treatment programs?**

One good way to judge the quality of cancer care of a hospital is to find out if it has been approved by the CoC. If it has, you know it meets certain standards and offers a range of cancer care services; and its ability to deliver quality cancer care is constantly being surveyed by the CoC. If you would like to find a CoC-approved center near you, see our Web page, *Find Treatment Centers* or call us at 1-800-227-2345.

**Is the hospital approved as a National Cancer Institute Cancer Center (as a cancer center or a comprehensive cancer center)?**

The National Cancer Institute Cancer Centers program supports research-oriented institutions across the United States that are known for their scientific excellence. You can get a list of the NCI-designated Cancer Centers by visiting the NCI Web site at [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

### **Is the hospital a member of the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC)?**

The ACCC Web site contains profiles of the cancer programs for over 600 member institutions. These profiles contain basic information about ACCC cancer programs, such as contact info, treatments offered, and special cancer services. You can find the ACCC Web site at [www.accc-cancer.org](http://www.accc-cancer.org).

### **If the patient is a child, is the hospital a member of the Children's Oncology Group?**

The Children's Oncology Group's (COG) mission is to cure and prevent childhood and adolescent cancer through scientific research and comprehensive care. Research has shown that kids who are treated at pediatric cancer centers have better outcomes. COG has nearly 250 affiliated centers that are linked to a university or children's hospital. To find a listing of COG institutions by state, go to their Web site at [www.curesearch.org/resources/cog.aspx](http://www.curesearch.org/resources/cog.aspx).

Other questions to ask

**Will I see the same staff members on each visit?**

**Is the facility clean and well-maintained?**

**What is the hospital's visiting policy?**

**What is the hospital's reputation?**

**Were my questions answered in a courteous, customer-friendly way?**

Notes

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For additional assistance please contact your American Cancer Society  
1 · 800 · ACS-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)