



Worksheet – How To Choose the Right Hospital

Your Name:

The hospital you are considering:

Questions to Ask:

- Does the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Organizations (JCAHO) accredit the hospital?

The Joint Commission is an independent nonprofit organization which evaluates and accredits more than 19,500 health care organizations in the United States, including hospitals, health care networks and health care organizations that provide home care, long-term care, behavioral health care, laboratory, and ambulatory care services. JCAHO provides information to the public about accreditation status and selecting quality care. Performance reports of accredited organizations and guidelines for choosing a health care facility are available to the public and can be obtained by calling JCAHO at (630) 792-5000 or visiting their web site at <http://www.jcaho.org>.

- Does the hospital have the appropriate services you will need at some point during the cancer experience?

- Pathology lab
- Diagnostic lab
- Blood bank
- 24 hour doctor staffing
- Tumor board

A tumor board consists of representatives from a range of cancer care disciplines. It meets regularly to confer on individual cases and, if possible, improve care. There is no charge to patients for this multidisciplinary consultation process.

- Social services department
- Respiratory therapy department
- Rehabilitation services department
- Advanced diagnostic equipment
Examples: magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT), positive electron tomography (PET)
- Advanced therapeutic equipment
Examples: laser treatments, radiation therapy equipment
- Intensive care unit
- Emergency room
- Anesthesiologists

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The hospital you are considering:

- Does the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons approve the cancer diagnosis and treatment program?

The Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons:

- Has members from 30 professional organizations who set guidelines for cancer diagnosis and care
- Represents 20% of hospitals in U.S., but treats 70% of patients who are treated for cancer
- Approval must be applied for and approved
- The institution must treat with state of the art equipment
- The institution must follow up with every patient treated in their facility for continuity and to detect recurrence
- Must have tumor board
- Encourages approved programs to offer prevention, screening, nutritional counseling, community outreach and support services

- Is the hospital approved as a National Cancer Institute (NCI) cancer center (a clinical cancer center, comprehensive cancer center, or cancer center?)

The National Cancer Institute cancer centers program supports research-oriented institutions across the United States that are known for their scientific excellence and their ability to integrate and focus a diversity of research approaches on the cancer problem. Comprehensive cancer centers integrate strong basic, clinical and prevention, control and population sciences.

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

The Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC) is a membership organization serving physicians, cancer centers, and hospitals across the country. The ACCC web site contains profiles of the cancer programs for over 500 member institutions. These profiles contain basic information about ACCC cancer programs.

- If the patient is a child, is the hospital a member of the Children's Oncology Group (COG)?

The Children's Oncology Group is made up of 4 study groups. They are:

- Children's Cancer Group
- Pediatric Oncology Group
- National Wilms' Tumor Study Group
- Intergroup Rhabdomyosarcoma Study Group

These are international collaborative groups that develop protocols, conduct clinical trials, and review treatment results. There are several medical institutions that are members of the COG in the US and abroad that treat pediatric cancer patients. Research has shown that children and adolescents with cancer, who are treated at pediatric cancer centers, ultimately have a better outcome and improved survival.

Worksheet – How To Choose the Right Hospital

Your Name:

The hospital you are considering:

General Questions to Ask:

- Will I see the same people on each visit?
- Is non-professional staff used extensively?
- Is the facility clean and well-maintained?
- Are you able to get your questions answered in a courteous, customer-friendly way?
- Does the staff in general seem knowledgeable about their jobs?

Notes: