



cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345

American Cancer Society National Cancer Information Center (NCIC)

The American Cancer Society's National Cancer Information Center (NCIC) is a nationwide cancer help line open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. NCIC is a virtually managed contact center with staff across the United States. Our corporate center is in Atlanta, GA. The NCIC has trained Specialists who answer calls from anyone who has a question about cancer (1-800-227-2345). Live online chat is also available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Central Time.

What do NCIC specialists do?

Provide cancer information

People need accurate, easy-to-understand information. The American Cancer Society has developed an extensive database of up-to-date cancer information, covering many topics, including information on:

- Specific cancers
- Treatment options
- Side effects
- Coping with cancer
- Medicines
- Pain control
- Clinical trials
- Cancer prevention
- Cancer screening
- Quitting tobacco

- How to talk with members of the cancer care team
- What to expect as a caregiver for someone with cancer
- How friends and family can help a person with cancer

The content in the database has been written and reviewed by a team of medical experts and further reviewed by professional editorial staff to make it as easy to read as possible. This information helps people better understand the disease and make informed decisions about cancer care.

Help callers find patient resources and services

Many national resources are available for cancer patients. The American Cancer Society keeps lists of cancer resources, such as support groups, patient service programs, and other community-based social services. We can help you find:

- Support groups (for example, NCIC can connect women with breast cancer online to a Reach To Recovery volunteer who is a breast cancer survivor)
- Online communities (through the American Cancer Society Cancer Survivors Network, a free online community, cancer patients can connect with other cancer survivors to share experiences, practical tips and hope)
- Social services
- Medical equipment
- Wigs and prostheses
- Financial programs
- Rides to treatment (when getting there is a challenge)
- Lodging (a place to stay when a cancer patient's treatment is far from home)

Help with cancer-related health insurance questions

The American Cancer Society also provides a service to help cancer patients struggling with health insurance-related problems. The Health Insurance Assistance Service (HIAS) helps cancer patients identify health insurance options for which they might be eligible. The HIAS also helps educate people on insurance issues related to recent health care law changes.

Put callers in touch with tobacco cessation programs

A call to the NCIC can put people in touch with the Society's tobacco cessation

resources, too. There are excellent options for tobacco users who are interested in quitting and staying that way. The tobacco cessation service offers tobacco users options that can help increase their chances of quitting for good, including telephone counseling, self-help materials, and referrals to local support programs.

Help with fundraiser/donation questions

Those who contact the NCIC can learn about and participate in American Cancer Society events, such as Relay For Life and Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, as well as cancer education programs.

Many people who contact the American Cancer Society want to learn about ways to financially support the Society's work. To help with these requests, Income Support Specialists explain the many ways callers can donate to the Society. Acknowledgment cards can be sent to family members and other loved ones.

Who are NCIC Specialists?

All NCIC Specialists go through many weeks of training to manage calls, understand call standards, and learn to share appropriate, relevant information with callers. The Specialists are monitored monthly and evaluated against many quality standards, including things like communication skills, call management techniques, and information.

Specialists who can help Spanish-speaking callers are on staff, too, and a translation service is used for those who speak other languages.

Oncology Nurse Information Specialists

People who contact the American Cancer Society with more specific medical and cancer-related questions may be referred to Oncology Nurse Information Specialists. This team of registered nurses provides one-on-one clinical information, such as information about treatments, side effects of treatments, testing, and disease-related questions. They also serve as a medical resource for other NCIC Specialists.

Frequently asked questions about the NCIC

How is the American Cancer Society's helpline unique?

The American Cancer Society's service is also the **only** nationwide cancer information

service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Society's service complements other services by providing high quality, current, reliable cancer information and access to local cancer resources such as support groups, patient services, and social services. These resources are needed to help patients and their families make informed choices and cope with the physical, psychological, and emotional challenges of a cancer diagnosis.

Will callers to the 800-number ever be asked for money, publication subscriptions, or to give to any other American Cancer Society programs?

The only time a solicitation is done is if the person has been a donor in the past.

How many calls/chats does NCIC handle?

The NCIC handles about 1.4 million contacts a year.

Can the NCIC provide local information for everyone in the US?

NCIC provides general cancer information, as well as local community services operated by the American Cancer Society that may be available based on the zip code a caller shares, in addition to national resources for each caller. The availability of the service is regularly verified.

How quickly can callers get information?

A lot of questions are answered right away with information shared over the phone. Much of the information can also be e-mailed. When email is not an option, mailed materials are processed the next business day.

If the 800-number is connected to the NCIC, how do callers reach their local American Cancer Society offices?

Our Specialists can connect people who call 1-800-227-2345 with their local offices.

What's the most popular request for information?

Most callers ask for information on programs and services available to them; they often

ask about certain types of cancer, the American Cancer Society in general, and local events, too. Our Specialists can also help with online event fundraising questions. Most of the remaining callers want to know how they can donate.

Will NCIC refer callers to specific doctors?

No. As an unbiased source of cancer information, the American Cancer Society does not make physician referrals. We do give information about finding local cancer care centers.

What are the education requirements for NCIC Specialists? How much training do they get?

Our Specialists are required to have a college degree or equivalent experience. Many of them have an education or professional background in social work or psychology. All NCIC staff possess a warm, caring spirit and the sincere desire to help people.

Specialists must complete more than 5 weeks of training to become familiar with American Cancer Society standards, the organization's history and structure, the information databases, and how to handle sensitive calls. Staff also receive regular continuing training to further increase their knowledge and skills and keep them current on the ever-changing world of cancer care.

Can callers receive on-line therapy?

No. Specialists do not provide formal therapy or counseling; still, they are trained to work with emotionally distraught callers. Specialists may suggest support groups or other resources where the callers can get the help they need.

Are the services and support groups you recommend reputable?

With more than 100 local American Cancer Society offices throughout the country, the American Cancer Society has been a community staple for more than 100 years. Through our work with health care communities around the country, we have learned which organizations are reputable, reliable, and most capable of meeting the needs of people with cancer and their families.

Can the NCIC meet the needs of non-English speaking callers?

Yes. The American Cancer Society's goal is to provide reliable, up-to-date cancer information to all people. Currently, we have Spanish-speaking Specialists. For

languages other than Spanish, we rely on TransPerfect Remote Interpreting (TRI). This service provides interpreters for more than 200 languages.

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