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[Choosing a Cancer Treatment Facility](#) [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 08/2015



Listen to the [Cancer.Net Podcast: Choosing a Cancer Treatment Facility](#) [3], adapted from this content.

Cancer requires specialized treatment, so it is important to find a treatment center that can meet your specific needs.

How to find a treatment facility

Some people first find an oncologist, which is a doctor who treats people with cancer. A person may then choose a treatment facility where that doctor works. Others first find a facility that treats the type of cancer they have and then find a doctor who works there. The staff at the treatment facility you chose, including nurses, physician assistants, social workers, and technicians, will become part of your [cancer care team](#) [4]. Learn more about [choosing a doctor](#) [5].

Insurance may also affect your decision. You may be able to choose only the facilities covered by your insurance program. Your insurance company can provide a list of approved facilities.

Even within these limits, you may have a number of different facilities from which to choose. Your doctor can help you decide based on your type of cancer, the type of treatment you will likely receive, and your personal needs. It may also help to talk with other patients about their experiences.

Consider the following factors before choosing a cancer treatment facility:

- How much experience does the facility have in treating your type of cancer? How successful has it been with those treatments?
- How close is the facility to your home or office?
- What support services does the facility offer to people with cancer and their families? Will you have access to social workers, dietitians, and other members of a health care team?
- Does the facility offer [clinical trials](#) [6]?
- If the facility is far away from your home, does it offer a place for you and your family to stay? Is it close to airports, hotels, and restaurants?

Accredited cancer treatment centers

A good place to start your search is among accredited cancer treatment centers. The National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Cancer Center Program includes more than 60 centers. All centers meet specific standards and fall into two categories:

Cancer centers. Cancer centers conduct laboratory research, clinical research, and population-based research. Although most cancer centers treat patients with cancer, some only conduct laboratory research.

Comprehensive cancer centers. Comprehensive cancer centers conduct the same activities as cancer centers, and they have community outreach and educational programs.

NCI also offers the [National Clinical Trials Network](#) [7], previously known as cooperative groups. These large networks of researchers, doctors, and other health care professionals conduct clinical trials across the country. Review and search a [complete list of NCI-designated cancer centers](#) [8].

The following national organizations also accredit treatment centers:

The American College of Surgeons (ACS). Through its Commission on Cancer (CoC), ACS has accredited more than 1,500 cancer programs. CoC treatment centers offer many services, including diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation, and support services. Learn more about [CoC cancer programs](#) [9].

The Joint Commission. This group evaluates general health care programs. It offers Quality Check performance reports for thousands of its accredited programs and organizations. Review the [Joint Commission’s performance report for a specific treatment center](#) [10].

Types of treatment settings

Once you have chosen a treatment facility, it is important to understand if you will receive your medical care in an inpatient or an outpatient setting. For inpatient care, you stay in the hospital and are closely monitored during treatment and recovery. Outpatient treatment does not require a hospital stay. It can take place at a hospital building, a clinic, or a doctor’s office. Talk with your doctor to learn about the various settings where you may receive your treatment.

More Information

[When the Doctor Says “Cancer”](#) [11]

[Making Decisions About Cancer Treatment](#) [12]

[Managing Your Care](#) [13]

[14]Additional Resources

[NCI: How to Find a Doctor or Treatment Facility If You Have Cancer](#) [15]

[Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: Navigating the Health Care System](#) [16]

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/managing-your-care/choosing-cancer-treatment-facility>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/22938>

[4] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24957>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24949>

[6] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24863>

[7] <http://www.cancer.gov/research/areas/clinical-trials/nctn#2>

[8] <http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/cancer-basics/cancer-care-team/find-nci-designated-cancer-center>

[9] <http://www.facs.org/cancerprogram/index.html>

[10] <http://www.qualitycheck.org/consumer/searchQCR.aspx>

[11] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25270>

[12] <http://www.cancer.net/node/24582>

[13] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25015>

[14] <http://www.cancer.net/navigating-cancer-care/managing-your-care>

[15] <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Therapy/doctor-facility>

[16] <http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/qualcare.html>