

How to Request a Second Opinion

Many people hesitate to seek a second opinion because they are concerned that they may offend or insult their physicians if they do so. **You should not feel any hesitation or guilt about stating that you want a second opinion.** It is standard medical practice to get another opinion. Doctors do it all the time as part of their own process of diagnosing a problem.

To seek a second opinion other than through the Department of Surgery's Second Opinion Program, you may find a qualified doctor in a number of ways:

- *Ask your primary care physician or specialist who is currently providing your care.* Doctors usually know who is skilled and has a good reputation in your field.
- *Talk to family and friends.* Tap into your network of personal references among people you trust and who have some knowledge of the subject.
- *Call hospitals, medical societies, and organizations.* Many organizations have databases that identify physicians in your specialty who practice in your area.
- *Contact your insurance company.* Your company may be able to provide specific recommendations among its list of enrolled providers.

During your second opinion consultation

When you speak to a new doctor about your request, be as direct and unemotional as possible. Tell the second doctor that you want an appraisal of the diagnosis you've been given and the treatment that's been proposed. Bring the results, including tests, from your original consultation. Then say, "Here is what my doctor told me about my condition. He recommends this surgery. What do you think?" Try not to telegraph your own opinion of what the first doctor suggests to the second doctor. You want his objective response, not a reaction to your own possibly negative emotions.