

DANA-FARBER/BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S



C A N C E R C E N T E R



SELECTING A
CANCER CENTER:
Frequently asked questions

Focused on cancer. Focused on life.

SELECTING A CANCER CENTER:

Frequently asked questions

If you or a loved one has recently been diagnosed with cancer or a related illness, you are undoubtedly making choices about medical care. This guide answers many questions that our patients and their family members ask us.

I've just learned that I have cancer. Where can I find reliable information regarding my diagnosis and treatment options?

There are several highly regarded, national resources that provide a wealth of information on cancer, including:

- **The National Cancer Institute (NCI)** – The NCI provides information on common cancer types, a dictionary of cancer terms, and current research funded through the NCI. NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers are awarded grants to support cancer research and must meet specific research criteria. Visit www.cancer.gov or call 1-800-4-CANCER for more information;
- **The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) and The American Cancer Society (ACS)** – The NCCN and the ACS have developed the NCCN/ACS Treatment Guidelines for Patients, offering you and your family reliable information to help you and your doctor to make timely and well-informed decisions

about your care. A copy of this publication may be ordered online at www.nccn.org or by calling 1-888-909-NCCN.

How can we help?

At Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center – a collaboration among the world-renowned cancer specialists and researchers at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital – we provide comprehensive online and print materials regarding cancer treatment, research, screening, and prevention. These materials have been developed in collaboration with our world-renowned cancer experts, who are also on the faculty of Harvard Medical School. Learn more about each form of cancer, our treatment services, and our physicians and clinical trials by visiting www.dfbwcc.org, or call 1-877-DFCI-BWH for more information.

What is the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)?

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) is a not-for-profit alliance of 20 of the world's leading cancer centers, working together to develop treatment guidelines for most cancers and dedicated to research that improves the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of cancer care. NCCN also offers a number of programs designed to help you and your family make informed decisions about your health.

How can we help?

Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center is a member of the NCCN. Our experts contribute to these treatment guidelines and learn from other members of NCCN.

What is an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center?

NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers receive funding from the National Cancer Institute for cancer research. The Centers must meet specific criteria for breadth and depth of basic/laboratory research, clinical research, and prevention, control, and population/behavioral science research – including strong integration across these three areas – in order to qualify for this designation. A complete list of NCI-designated Cancer Centers is available on the NCI website at www.cancer.gov.

How can we help?

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital are founding members of Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center, one of the largest NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the United States. Our research contributions are advancing the understanding of cancer and new approaches to treatment. In turn, this enables us to bring new approaches to our patients as quickly as possible in the form of clinical trials and newly approved treatments.

What types of doctors treat cancer and how do I choose the right doctor for me?

There are many doctors who treat cancer and related diseases, including medical oncologists, hematologists, surgical oncologists, radiation oncologists, and interventional radiologists. In a cancer center, these doctors work together to develop and deliver the best treatment approach for each patient. (For a glossary of cancer terms, please visit www.cancer.gov.)

Your primary care doctor or the doctor diagnosing your cancer can refer you to a cancer specialist. Websites of major cancer centers or your hospital are also good sources of information. Your cancer specialists should be

board certified in their specialties and provide information on the number of patients they treat each year and/or the number of procedures they have performed. In addition, they should be involved in research and clinical trials specific to your form of cancer or be able to refer you as needed.

How can we help?

We provide an online directory of our cancer experts and a detailed description of our specialized cancer programs and our approach to comprehensive personalized care at www.dfbwcc.org.

What should I look for in a cancer center?

Your cancer center should offer a multidisciplinary approach to care and a team of specialists dedicated to providing the best treatment for you and your type of cancer. Your treatment team should include all of the specialists you may need. Your team should also meet with you to discuss your diagnosis and make recommendations on treatment options – including clinical trials – as well as answer any questions you or your family members may have. Because the diagnosis and treatment of cancer is advancing at a rapid pace, a leading cancer center should have the

most advanced technologies and access to trials of new therapies and treatments.

How can we help?

Visit us online at www.dfbwcc.org and select the treatment center dedicated to your type of cancer for information on the latest treatments available. This site also provides a description of the many support services available to help cancer patients and their families before, during, and after treatment.

What is a clinical trial and how can it help me?

Clinical trials are research studies that seek answers to questions about new treatments. These trials test new therapies, look at new ways to give treatment, find out how lifestyle changes can help cancer patients, and explore ways to keep cancer from recurring. Participants in clinical trials can play a more active role in their own health care, gain access to new research treatments before they are widely available, and help others by contributing to medical research.

How can we help?

Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center provides access to hundreds of new clinical trials each year. We have developed a detailed description of clinical trials and an online video of what it means to be involved in a clinical trial – both available to you at www.dfbwcc.org.

In addition to treatment, what other services should a cancer center provide?

A cancer center should not only provide access to the latest therapies, but also offer a wide range of services to support you and your family before, during, and after treatment. Examples of these services include support groups, counseling, pastoral care, social work, resource and learning centers, and interpreters.

In addition, a cancer center should provide care for patients with special needs. For example, young patients should have access to genetic and fertility specialists prior to undergoing treatment.

Cancer centers should also offer services in pain management and nutritional counseling, as well as integrative or complementary therapies – such as massage, acupuncture, and meditation. Having all services available in one place ensures that all care providers work together as a team.

How can we help?

Visit us at www.dfbwcc.org for an overview of the support services that can be helpful for you.

What if I am at risk for cancer?

If you are at risk for cancer, it is important to obtain regular screenings and discuss any preventative measures that you may take. Look for a cancer center that provides specialized care for patients at risk and is actively involved in research related to cancer prevention.

How can we help?

Please refer to the publication “*Your Guide to Cancer Prevention and Screenings*®,” enclosed in this Cancer Center Information Package. The guide provides key information regarding risk factors and screening guidelines for major forms of cancer. In addition, we offer specialized programs for patients at high risk of breast, gastrointestinal, gynecologic and many other forms of cancer. Please call 1-877-DFCI-BWH or visit us online at www.dfbwcc.org for more information.

Connecting you to Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center

For information on the programs and services at Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center, or to schedule an appointment with one of our specialists, please call 1-877-DFCI-BWH (1-877-332-4294) or visit us online at www.dfbwcc.org.

Our 12 multidisciplinary teams of disease-specific experts at Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center – including surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, hematologists, radiologists, pathologists, palliative care specialists, nurses, dietitians, social workers, and researchers – are dedicated to delivering specialized care and the latest treatment options for patients with the following diseases:

- **Breast Cancer** – The Breast Oncology Center provides advanced care for patients with all forms of breast cancer, as well as patients at high risk for developing breast cancer;
- **Central Nervous System Cancer** – The Center for Neuro-Oncology provides advanced care for patients with brain, spine, and other central nervous system tumors, including primary and secondary tumors;
- **Endocrine Cancer** – The Endocrine Cancer Treatment Center provides advanced care for patients with thyroid, parathyroid, adrenocortical, and other forms of endocrine cancer;
- **Gastrointestinal Cancer** – The Gastrointestinal Cancer Treatment Center provides advanced care for patients with colorectal, pancreatic, stomach, liver, gallbladder, bile duct, and esophageal cancers, as well as carcinoid tumors;
- **Genitourinary Cancer** – The Lank Center for Genitourinary Oncology provides advanced care for patients with prostate, kidney, bladder, penile, and testicular cancers;
- **Gynecologic Cancer** – The Gynecologic Oncology Program offers advanced care for patients with ovarian, endometrial, cervical, vulvar, vaginal, and trophoblastic cancers;
- **Head and Neck Cancer** – The Head and Neck Cancer Treatment Center provides advanced care for patients with cancers of the larynx, nasopharynx, oral cavity, pharynx, paranasal sinuses, and salivary gland;
- **Hematologic Cancer** – The Center for Hematologic Oncology offers advanced care – including stem cell/bone marrow transplantation – for patients with leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, and other blood cancers;
- **Non-malignant Hematologic Diseases and Disorders** – The Hematology Treatment Center provides advanced care for patients with blood disorders, including hemophilia and sickle cell disease;
- **Sarcoma and Bone Cancer** – The Center for Sarcoma and Bone Oncology provides advanced care for patients with all forms of sarcoma and bone or soft tissue tumors;
- **Skin Cancer** – The Center for Cutaneous Oncology offers advanced care for all forms of skin cancer, including melanoma, basal and squamous cell carcinomas, and cutaneous T- and B-cell lymphomas;
- **Thoracic Cancer** – The Thoracic Oncology Program offers advanced care for patients with lung cancer, mesothelioma, chest wall tumors, esophageal cancer, and other thoracic malignancies.

Each year, Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center offers patients access to hundreds of new clinical trials. Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center also offers a wide variety of support services and integrative therapies for patients and leads many efforts to prevent the development of cancers in high-risk patients.

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