THE VALUE OF A CARDIOVASCULAR SECOND OPINION

5 Things You Need To Know About Getting A Second Opinion
Northwestern’s Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute
5 Things You Need to Know About Second Opinions

Some people choose not to seek a second opinion before deciding what medical treatment is right for them.

Common reasons include busy schedules, a desire to get medical treatment close to home, or simply a reluctance to jeopardize an existing relationship with a primary care physician or specialist. But for those that do, a second opinion can drastically alter their treatment decisions.

When your heart and vascular condition requires complicated treatments or major surgery, it makes sense to get an opinion from another expert. But, how do you know a second opinion is in order? Here are answers to these and other important questions.

1. When should I get a second opinion?

If your healthcare provider suggests non-emergency surgery or a major medical test, it can be worthwhile to get a second opinion for any of the following reasons:

- Your diagnosis is unclear
- You’ve been told you have a rare or life-threatening condition
- You have multiple medical problems
- The recommended treatment is risky, controversial or experimental
- You have a choice of treatments or medical tests that vary widely in cost
- You’re not responding to a treatment as expected
- You have lost confidence in your medical care provider
- Your health plan requires a second opinion

“When faced with a cardiovascular challenge, getting a second opinion should be the first thing you do.”

Patrick M. McCarthy, MD
Director, Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute
Northwestern Medicine

CALL 312-NM-HEART (664-3278) TO SPEAK WITH US OR VISIT HEART.NM.ORG 1
2. Where should I start?
Consult someone with at least the same level of expertise as your current healthcare provider. Consider contacting a specialist or someone at an institution specializing in your condition, such as Northwestern’s Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute. These specialty centers will have the latest technology and a team of experts to review your case.

3. What should I tell my current doctor?
Most doctors will acknowledge their patients’ right to a second opinion, so be honest and straightforward. Be sure to ask for your medical records so you can share them with the doctor giving the second opinion. By law, your doctor must provide these records to you. You may have to pay to have copies made.

4. Will my insurance pay for a second opinion?
Most health insurance plans will pay for a second opinion, but be sure to contact your insurance company beforehand to find out for sure. In some cases, if you don’t get a second opinion for a procedure, your out-of-pocket costs may be higher.

5. How do I prepare for a second opinion?
Prior to your appointment research your condition and treatment options so that you arrive as well-informed as possible. This will make it easier for you to understand the conversation and ask helpful questions. Make sure the doctor has received your medical records, including test results, prior to your appointment or bring the records with you to the appointment. Bring a friend or family member to listen, take notes and ask questions. Two heads are better than one for remembering important information. Bring a pen to take notes and ask questions — those that you prepare ahead of time and those that come up during your second opinion conversation. The next page of this document is a prepared list of questions you may find helpful to bring and ask at your second opinion appointment.

The First Place For A Second Opinion
Getting a second opinion at Northwestern’s Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute.

To obtain a second opinion at Northwestern’s Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute, on either the Chicago or Lake Forest campus, please call 312-NM-HEART (664-3278). Our patient access representatives will help you schedule an appointment with one of our cardiovascular doctors and provide instructions on how and where to send your medical records.
## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DOCTOR GIVING THE SECOND OPINION

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<td><strong>Q:</strong> Do you agree with my current diagnosis?</td>
<td><strong>A:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> Do you recommend any additional tests?</td>
<td><strong>A:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> What treatments options are available?</td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> What are the risks associated with each of the treatment options?</td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> What are the side effects and/or long-term effects associated with each of the treatment options?</td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> How long are the treatment recovery periods?</td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> What are the goals of the treatment?</td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> What would happen if I waited or chose no treatment?</td>
<td><strong>A:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Q:</strong> What treatment option do you recommend and why?</td>
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Northwestern Medicine and Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute

Recognized for providing exemplary patient care and state-of-the-art advancements.

Northwestern Medicine® is the collaboration between Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine around a strategic vision to transform the future of healthcare. It encompasses the research, teaching, and patient care activities of the academic medical center.

Sharing a commitment to superior quality, academic excellence and patient safety, the organizations within Northwestern Medicine comprise a combined workforce of more than 25,000 among clinical and administrative staff, medical and science faculty and medical students.

The entities involved in Northwestern Medicine remain separate organizations. Northwestern Medicine is a trademark of Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and is also used by Northwestern University.

Northwestern Memorial has nursing Magnet Status, the nation’s highest recognition for patient care and nursing excellence. For 15 years running, Northwestern Memorial has been rated among the “100 Best Companies for Working Mothers” guide by Working Mother magazine. The hospital is a recipient of the prestigious National Quality Health Care Award and has been chosen by Chicagoans as the Consumer Choice according to the National Research Corporation’s annual survey for 15 years.

The Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute is a world-class heart and vascular program that is a destination for those requiring highly specialized cardiovascular care. Our clinical excellence, comprehensive programs and superior clinical outcomes have again been recognized at the national level.

In 2015-16 U.S. News & World Report ranked our Cardiology and Heart Surgery program #9 in the nation for the last eight years, the top ranked program in Illinois and the region.

*U.S. News & World Report, America’s Best Hospital, 2015-16

Northwestern Medicine ranks #11 in the U.S. News & World Report 2015-16* Honor of America’s Best Hospitals. The hospital is recognized by U.S. News & World Report in 13 of 16 clinical specialties in #1 Illinois and Chicago in their state and metro rankings, respectively.