

## **Being Sure You Have the Best Doctor**

It is of the utmost importance that you become your own advocate as you manage the diagnosis and treatment of your disease. There are several points to observe as you go through the process of selecting the doctor with whom you will partner to treat your disease and to insure the best possible quality of life.

Look at the diplomas, certificates and licenses on the wall; find out where he/she trained and what their specialty is.

Ask the doctor with what hospitals are they affiliated. Ideally, you will want to be treated in a comprehensive cancer center designated by the National Cancer Institute or a hospital part of a university medical center.

Always get copies of your medical records, x-rays, etc. should you want to get a second opinion and to have an on-going medical history.

When you meet with the doctor, always come prepared to talk about your concerns and to ask the questions you need to have answered. Bring a family member or friend with you to be certain that you cover all the relevant points. Ask the doctor if you can record the consultation in case you need clarification afterwards.

Ask how many times they have performed the procedure in question and how frequently they now do it.

Get to know the doctor's physician assistant and/or nurse in order to have someone on the staff that you can ask questions of.

Is the doctor willing to answer all of your questions and to take time with you to be certain that you are comfortable with the decision you will have to make?

Is the doctor willing to give you names of former patients with whom you can speak? Did the doctor refer you to a patient support group to aid in your decision-making?

Ask other doctors who they would go to if they were faced with the situation you are. Also use certain Internet sites such as, Best Doctors ([www.bestdoctors.com](http://www.bestdoctors.com)) for criteria for choosing your doctor.