



How to get a second opinion

brainstrust information sheet

Know Hows are published by *brainstrust* to help people living with a brain tumour to understand current topics. They are produced with input from relevant scientific and clinical experts and are written in a way that should help you to understand often complicated topics.

If you have an idea for a Know How, then please let us know.

If you have any queries, don't forget you can talk to one of our support specialists on **01983 292 405** or email **hello@brainstrust.org.uk**.

Why do we need this Know How?

We are often asked about second or even third opinions. Seeking more opinions has both advantages and disadvantages. This Know How is to:

- help you understand the pros and cons of a second opinion
- bring some clarity as to what the options are
- inform you how to seek another opinion.

Evidence

People seek a second opinion for a variety of reasons. Evidence shows that the main reasons are clinical uncertainty or dissatisfaction with patient–physician communication. People who seek a second opinion tend to be satisfied with the opinion (84%), and 77% felt their health improved.*

*Shmueli, L. et al. (2017). Seeking a second medical opinion: composition, reasons and perceived outcomes in Israel. *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research*, 6(1):67.

What does this mean?

Seeking a second opinion is not without its pitfalls. Everyone reacts to a serious diagnosis in different ways. It is your right to seek further opinions, and this will empower some people. Some people would prefer not to exercise this right. Some people prefer to know as little as possible about their diagnosis. Some people like to relinquish control of their situation to others. All of these are perfectly normal and acceptable ways of coping. And seeking second, even third, opinions can cause confusion and stress. But they can inform, and help with decision-making. They can also be reassuring. Our belief is that you need to be informed to make decisions. And that might mean gathering information and then deciding not to make a decision. That's a decision too.

Ask yourself

- What do I hope to gain by seeking second or third opinions?
- What do I want to know?
- What do I need to know?

- What are the questions I want to ask?
- How will I react if I just keep hearing the same thing?
- What are the pitfalls of a second opinion? The benefits?

How to seek a second opinion

You will need a copy set of the latest MRI scans. Ask your hospital for these. There is no point in going for a second opinion without the latest set of MRI scans. Access these before you do anything else.

There are three ways of seeking a second opinion:

1. Visit your GP and ask for a second, even third, opinion. If you want more information about where you might go and who might be appropriate to see, ask us at *brainstrust* or ask your consultant or your GP. Get your GP on your side – they can unlock so much for you.
2. We can also help. Contact **hello@brainstrust.org.uk**. We can't give you a second opinion, but we know someone who can – at one of the leading neurosurgical centres in the UK.
3. And then there is also Trustedoctor. This platform enables patients to access the right specialist anywhere in the world, regardless of geographical location. The comprehensive doctor profiles provide all of the information that a patient requires to decide for themselves who is the best fit for their specific condition. This resource enables you to:
 - Search a global database for the best doctor for your needs.

- Upload your documents and a summary of your case.
- Receive a private, real-time video consultation within the Trustedoctor platform. Each consultation is followed up with a comprehensive written report.
- Share and discuss documents, scans and more during your consultation with your doctor using a live document viewer.

Trustedoctor specialists are hand-picked by a board of medical experts, based on a number of key factors:

- clinical experience
- academic impact
- endorsement by peers and patients
- their clinical network.

Contact

Talk to *brainstrust*. We can help. You can call, write, type, text.

Email for help and support:
hello@brainstrust.org.uk

Telephone: **01983 292 405**

Other helpful links

brainstrust.org.uk/second-opinions

trustedoctor.com

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Production of *brainstrust's* information is supported by the Anna Horrell fund. Anna, wife and mum, tragically passed away in August 2017 after a valiant fight against a glioblastoma. Throughout her life and her illness, she was an inspiration to us all, fighting bravely and cheerfully in the face of adversity. She was the beating heart of our family, and her loss left a hole in our lives that can never be replaced. In her incredible memory, we are passionate about helping others diagnosed with a brain tumour to navigate this most difficult of journeys.

Mike, Tom, Rebecca, Charlie & Sophie