

## **Out-of-Country Referrals**

This handout offers information on an out-of-country referral for:

- A second opinion
- A clinical trial

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) or the Canadian government will not cover expenses related to an out-of-country referral for these reasons. Your private insurance company may or may not cover some expenses. You are responsible to contact your insurance company about this.

You will be responsible for these expenses:

- The cost of travel to and from the out-of-country location
- Accommodations and other personal expenses while you are out-of-country
- Costs related to participating in the clinical trial

There may be other expenses not listed here.

The out-of-country healthcare team may require you to have certain tests, procedures or treatments. These need to be organized by the out-of-country healthcare team. These tests, procedures or treatment may not be available in Ontario or covered by OHIP.

### **What you need to know about out-of-country clinical trials**

1. The hospital or clinic offering the clinical trial may decide you do not qualify for the clinical trial. They may also choose not to accept you into the clinical trial. You may not be told this until after you travel to where the clinical trial is offered.
2. You can say no to a clinical trial at any time if you feel it is not the right choice for you. This decision will not affect your care and treatment here in Ontario.
3. Your oncologist may identify this clinical trial as a possible option for your care. Your oncologist may not endorse (agree with) or support the safety or effectiveness of this clinical trial because they do not have all the needed information.

### **What you need to know before participating in an out-of-country clinical trial**

Ask the hospital or clinic offering the clinical trial the list of questions below. The answers to these questions will help you make a decision about participating in the clinical trial.

- What are the possible benefits of participating in the clinical trial? Is it to cure your cancer, help you feel better, or both?
- What are the possible risks of participating in the clinical trial?
- What are the expenses you need to pay for to participate in an out-of-country clinical trial?

- What treatments, tests, scans, or other procedures do you need to have during the clinical trial? How often do you need to have them done? Will you need to pay for them? Many of these tests, scans or other procedures may not be available in Ontario or covered by OHIP.
- How long are you required to participate in the clinical trial?
- How often are you required to go back to the out-of-country hospital or clinic during the clinical trial?
- How often are you required to go back to the out-of-country hospital or clinic after you finish the clinical trial?
- How will this clinical trial affect your daily life? Will you be able to work, exercise, or perform your usual activities?
- What happens if your health changes or gets worse during the clinical trial?
- What happens if you have side effects from the clinical trial? Who will manage these side effects?
- What happens if you decide to leave the clinical trial?
- Are there reasons you could be removed from participating in the clinical trial?
- Are there reasons the clinical trial might be stopped early?
- Will the clinical trial's research team provide any information or updates on your care and treatment to your oncologist?
- How soon do you need to make a decision about participating in the clinical trial?

Making a decision to participate in an out-of-country clinical trial is not easy. It is important to consider all of the above information as you make the decision right for you.

*This handout was created by the Patient Education Program at the Durham Regional Cancer Centre/Lakeridge Health. It was last reviewed in May of 2025.*

