

Getting a second opinion in urology: what to bring and ask

A second opinion is most useful when the second clinician receives the same complete evidence, including images, pathology, procedure notes, treatment history and your goals, and can offer a genuinely different perspective. It should leave you with a clearer decision, not simply a larger stack of options.



Figure 50.1. The High-Value Second Opinion. The best second opinion verifies diagnosis, tests assumptions, compares alternatives, and clarifies timing.

Key points

- Bring the actual images and pathology, not only summaries, so the reasoning can be reviewed.
- Request records before the appointment so the visit is not spent gathering them.
- Seek expertise that complements the decision, such as another discipline or someone who offers alternative techniques.
- Disagreement is not proof that someone is wrong; separate disputed facts from different values.
- Define what success means before comparing treatments of different intensity.
- If the plan is to watch, know what is being watched, how often, and what would trigger action.

Questions to ask your urologist

- Which part of my diagnosis or recommendation most needs independent review?
- Have you reviewed my actual images and pathology, or only the reports?
- Can you discuss all the reasonable options, including ones you don't perform?
- Why is your recommendation better for my anatomy, biology and goals?
- What happens if I wait, and what finding would make this urgent?
- Where do you disagree with the first opinion, and what evidence would resolve it?

