

BEST DOCTORS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Best Doctors?

Best Doctors® connects seriously ill Canadians and their treating physicians with world renowned specialists to confirm the right diagnosis and the right treatment options – without having to leave home.

Using its global network of over 50,000 world renowned peer-nominated specialists, Best Doctors provides access to the best medical knowledge to millions of people around the world when they are faced with a serious medical condition.

How does the Best Doctors service work?

If a patient is uncertain of a diagnosis or has questions about their treatment plan they may contact Best Doctors. One call sets it all in motion. The Best Doctors member simply picks up the phone and dials our toll free number and they will be connected to a Member Advocate, a Registered Nurse, who will determine the level of service the member requires. The Member Advocate will be dedicated to the member's case and will support them throughout the process.

The Member Advocate will interview the member to collect a detailed medical history and to document the member's questions. This same Member Advocate stays with the member throughout their entire interaction with Best Doctors.

The member is asked to sign a release, permitting Best Doctors to work with the member's treating doctors and facilities to collect all of the pertinent medical information in the member's case. This includes medical records, imaging studies, test results, treatment plans, surgical reports, or whatever else is available. If pathology specimens have been taken, we collect these as well to re-stain and re-analyze them at a Centre of Excellence. The entire InterConsultation™ process is completed without the member ever having to leave home.

Once the medical records have been collected, a multidisciplinary team of Harvard-trained physicians review the material in rigorous detail. This team is tasked with:

- 1) identifying the important issues in the case;
- 2) distilling the specifics of the case into a detailed Clinical Summary;
- 3) generating specific questions about the key issues in the case; and
- 4) recommending the particular specialty and experience of the Best Doctors specialist required to consult on the case.

Best Doctors then searches its proprietary global network of 50,000 world renowned peer-nominated physicians to identify a physician best suited to review the case. The physicians in the Best Doctors network have been identified by their peers as being the "best" in their specialty areas.

The Best Doctors expert(s) retained for the case performs a thorough analysis and answers the questions posed, writing up a report of their findings and recommendations. The entire package

is sent to the member and their treating physician. The Member Advocate follows up with the member to explain the findings of the report and if appropriate, the Best Doctors physician speaks directly with the member's treating physician.

The InterConsultation Report serves as a clinical roadmap tailored to the member's individual case. The Member Advocate is always available to the member even after treatment decisions are made and to address any new issues that may arise in the course of treatment. The Best Doctors Member Advocate regularly checks in with members at major milestones to determine how the member's care is progressing. Additional InterConsultations may be initiated if there are changes in the member's medical condition or a new unrelated illness presents itself.

The goal is to work collaboratively with the member's treating physician – to provide additional resources and the uniquely educative interaction with top specialists that may not otherwise be available to them.

Does Best Doctors retest all pathology?

The key value proposition of Best Doctors is that it delivers *certainty* to members facing *uncertainty* about their medical conditions. Rather than providing just another "opinion," Best Doctors delivers a complete and methodical understanding of a member's medical condition giving actionable and educative information to both the Best Doctors member and their treating physician – all without the Best Doctors member ever having to leave home.

In addition to reviewing all of the member's medical files and diagnostic tests, Best Doctors retests pathology at a Centre of Excellence – University Health Network, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center or Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center – by expert pathologists, using the latest staining techniques.

Due to the subjectivity of the pathology tests, the accuracy of these tests hinges on how much experience that pathologist and lab has with them. The pathologists at the Centres of Excellence Best Doctors uses to retest pathology, have had the opportunity to review complex cases on regular basis – in fact they are renowned for reviewing some of the most complex cases in the world.

By essentially deconstructing and reconstructing a member's diagnosis, the Best Doctors service is recognized as providing substantial improvements in the quality – and cost – of care, as well as providing high levels of member satisfaction.

Is Best Doctors service necessary or is this just manufacturing a perceived need?

Over the past 20 years Best Doctors has completed tens of thousands of InterConsultations. The results speak for themselves: Best Doctors has changed a diagnosis 22% of the time, modified treatment 61% of the time, and reduced invasive procedures by 67%.

The aim is to ensure right diagnosis and best treatment recommendations, while avoiding or reducing invasive procedures and unnecessary treatments – ultimately leading to improved recovery times and outcomes.

Once the diagnosis and treatment are confirmed, the treating physician and Best Doctors member can then work together to choose the most appropriate next steps.

Who pays any additional related expenses?

A majority of Best Doctors services involves the InterConsultation with top experts around the world who review the case and provide support and resources to the patient and doctors and that may not be available to them locally. The goal is work with the attending physician so that the patient does not have to leave home.

If a member decides to travel outside of Canada for treatment, the expenses related to the services are the responsibility of the member. Some costs may be partially funded by provincial health plans if the institution is within the member's province or within Canada. Canadian specialist referrals are required to go through the member's treating physician.

Do public health care plans pay for treatments recommended by Best Doctors?

Best Doctors only recommends courses of treatment. The Best Doctors member and their treating physician make the final decisions about treatment based on the recommendations and information provided to them by Best Doctors. In most cases, the costs are covered through the public health care plan.

Can Best Doctors arrange for an individual to “jump the queue”?

Best Doctors does not own or operate private health care clinics. We call upon our world renowned, peer-nominated specialists to provide their expertise through our InterConsultation service.

Best Doctors services are very affordable and are typically offered as an employee benefit, with the employee paying nothing. Today, about 30% of healthcare costs are private, paid through insurance carriers and employer programs (ie: Health and Dental Insurance) – Best Doctors coverage is no different in that respect.

Best Doctors members do not have to leave home to use our services. Best Doctors Canada works within the Canadian healthcare system and has no leverage to help our members jump the queue. Instead, our services are designed to ensure our members are in the correct queue.

Is Best Doctors a Private Health Care?

No. There are many benefits that exist out there to help employees from Dental Insurance, Medicine Insurance, Long Term Disability to Group Critical Illness. Best Doctors is a service that is part of a group employee insurance plan, a stand-alone employee benefit or through individual and family coverage policies. The service connects members and their treating physician with top specialists around the world if they are uncertain of a diagnosis or have questions about treatment options.

Who decides who is a Best Doctor?

Simply, their medical peers recommend them. Only current Best Doctors receive our survey to nominate and vote for Best Doctors. Our survey asks one simple question, replicating the way

that doctors find the best care for themselves and their families: *“If you or a loved one needed a doctor in your specialty, whom would you choose?”*

Physicians are then screened for licensure, certification and disciplinary actions. To ensure the integrity of our database, we initiate the process every 18 months.

Over the past 20 years, the global network of Best Doctors has grown to 50,000 specialists, including almost 2,000 Canadian physicians. Best Doctors does not provide, nor accept fees for the privilege of inclusion in the database. Physicians can only be accepted into the database through a peer-reviewed nomination poll.

Specialists outside Canada are included on the Best Doctors network. Does this mean that Best Doctors is driving patients to the United States or elsewhere in the world?

The advantage of the Best Doctors network is that it is global – top specialists from around the world have been recognized. And, since the Best Doctors member does not ever have to leave home, a Best Doctor expert can be identified from anywhere in the world to complete an InterConsultation.

In fact, almost all cases are treated and resolved locally or at least in the member’s home province. But in certain exceptional cases, the patient and physician in Canada may decide that it’s in the patient’s best interest to seek medical care outside the province or outside Canada.

How long have Best Doctors services been available in Canada?

Best Doctors has been servicing the marketplace for more than 20 years and opened the Canadian office in 1998.

How many Canadians currently have Best Doctors service available to them?

Almost 5,000,000 Canadians have Best Doctors coverage either through a critical illness policy, or a group benefits plan, or as a stand-alone employee benefit, or on an individual basis.

Does an illness or condition have to be life threatening to consult Best Doctors?

When members call in, Best Doctors will help determine the level of service the member needs. In some cases an InterConsultation may not be required and we can answer the member’s concern through one of the other services such as Best Doctors 360°™ which delivers information that is individually tailored to meet the needs of each Best Doctors members. Through this unique program the Best Doctors Member Advocate provides access to resources, ongoing one-on-one support, customized health coaching and a wide range of health related information so the member can take control of their own healthcare.

Our other services include FindBestDoc™ and FindBestCare®. If a referral for specialist care is needed, our FindBestDoc service is available. The FindBestDoc service helps a member find a specialist and will arrange referrals, appointments and accommodations if out-of-town travel is required. (Access to a Canadian specialist requires a referral from the member’s treating physician.)

While we strive to work within the Canadian healthcare system, Best Doctors will access hospital and doctor discounts if out-of-country care is necessary through our FindBestCare service. Best Doctors will ensure that vital information is sent to the medical specialists involved.

Expenses relating to FindBestDoc and FindBestCare services are the responsibility of the member.