



## Questions to ask my doctor: About prostate cancer

Being diagnosed with prostate cancer can be scary and stressful. You probably have a lot of questions and concerns. Learning about the disease, how it is treated, and how this information may apply to you is a lot to do on your own. You might need some help. Your American Cancer Society can give you general information about your disease and its treatment, but your doctor is the best source of information about your situation.

It is important for you to be able to talk frankly and openly with your cancer care team. They want to answer all of your questions, no matter how minor they might seem to you. But it helps if you know what to ask. Here are some questions you can use to help you better understand your cancer and your options. These questions are grouped by where you are in the cancer experience. Not all of the questions will apply to you, but they should help get you started.

For information on prostate cancer please contact your American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

### When you're told you have prostate cancer

#### **Exactly what type of prostate cancer do I have?**

**How do I get a copy of my pathology report?**

**What is my PSA (prostate-specific antigen) level? What does this mean?**

**What is the cancer's clinical stage and grade (Gleason score)? What does this mean?**

**What are the chances that the cancer has spread beyond my prostate?**

**How does this affect my treatment options and long-term outcome (prognosis)?**

**What are my chances of survival?**

**How much experience do you have treating this type of cancer?**

**Will I need other tests before we can decide on a treatment?**

**What treatment choices do I have?**

**What treatment do you recommend and why?**

**What is the goal of my treatment?**

**Is watchful waiting (active surveillance) an option for me? Why or why not?**

**Do I need to have my prostate removed or treated with radiation? Why or why not?**

**If I have surgery (a radical prostatectomy), will the nerves be spared?  
Will it be laparoscopic or robot-assisted?**

**If I have radiation, what types of radiation therapy might work best for me, external beam or implanted seeds (brachytherapy)?**

**What are the pros and cons of radiation versus surgery in my case?**

**What other treatment(s) might be right for me?**

**Should I get a second opinion? How do I do that?**

**Should I think about taking part in a clinical trial?**

## **Questions to ask my doctor: About prostate cancer**

When deciding on a treatment plan

**What are the chances the cancer will come back with this treatment plan?**

**What would we do if the treatment doesn't work or if the cancer comes back?**

**Will I be able to have children after treatment?**

**How long will treatment last? What will it involve? Where will it be done?**

**What risks and side effects should I expect?**

**What can I do to reduce the side effects of the treatment?**

**How will treatment affect my daily activities?**

**What are the chances that I will have problems controlling my urine (incontinence) or getting an erection (impotence)?**

**What are the chances that I will have other urinary, sexual, or rectal problems?**

**Will the treatment hurt? Will I have any scars?**

# **Questions to ask my doctor: About prostate cancer**

Before treatment

**What can I do to get ready for treatment?**

**Will I need blood transfusions?**

**Should I follow a special diet or make other lifestyle changes?**

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## **During treatment**

Once you have decided on a course of treatment, you will need to know what to expect and what to look out for. All of the following questions may not apply to you, but asking the ones that do may be helpful.

**How will we know if the treatment is working?**

**Is there anything I can do to manage side effects?**

**What symptoms should I tell you about right away?**

**How can I reach you on nights, holidays, or weekends?**

**Will I need a special diet during treatment?**

**Are there any limits on what I can do?**

**What kind of exercise should I do, and how often?**

**Can you suggest a mental health professional I can see if I start to feel overwhelmed, depressed, or distressed?**

**Will I need special tests, such as imaging scans or blood tests, and how often?**

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After treatment

**Will I need a special diet after treatment?**

**Are there any limits on what I can do?**

**What can I do about impotence/incontinence and other side effects?  
Will I recover normal function? What can I do in the meantime?**

**What kind of exercise should I do now?**

**What type of follow-up will I need after treatment?**

**How often will I need to have follow-up exams and imaging tests?**

**What blood tests will I need?**

**What should my PSA level be after treatment? How long will it take it to get there?**

**How often will my PSA be checked?**

**My PSA level is still detectable. Does this mean there is still cancer in my body?**

**My PSA level is higher than the last time it was checked. Does this mean the cancer has returned?**

**How will I know if the cancer has returned? What should I watch for?**

**What are my options if the cancer comes back?**

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## Other questions I need answered

Along with the sample questions above, be sure to ask any others you might have. For instance, you might need to know more about how long it will take to recover from surgery so you can plan your work schedule. Or, you may need to ask about insurance coverage or how you can get help paying for treatment. Write your own questions below.

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For additional assistance please contact your American Cancer Society  
1 · 800 · ACS-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)