



Questions to Ask My Doctor about My Cancer

Before Treatment

Being diagnosed with cancer can be overwhelming. Learning on your own about the disease, how it is treated, and how to apply this information to your situation is a daunting task and you may feel you need some help. While we can give you general information about your disease and its treatment, your doctor is the best source of information about your particular situation.

It is important to have frank, open discussions with your cancer care team. They want to answer all of your questions, no matter how trivial they might seem. But you need to know what to ask. Getting answers to the questions below can help you understand your cancer and your options, so that you can be an active participant in your cancer treatment.

- What kind of cancer do I have and where is it located?
- Has my cancer spread beyond the primary site?
- What is the stage of my cancer and what does that mean in my case?
- What treatment choices do I have?
- What do you recommend and why?
- What risks or side effects are there to the treatments you suggest?
- What are the chances my cancer will come back with these treatment plans? What is my prognosis with these treatments?

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- What should I do to be ready for treatment?
- Should I follow a special diet?
- Will the treatment be painful? Will I have any scars?

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During and After Treatment

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

- How will you know if the treatment is working?
- Is there anything more that I can do to manage side effects?
- Are there any symptoms that I should notify you about immediately?
- Will I need to be on a special diet during and after treatment?
- Are there any limitations on my activities or amount of exercise?
- How often will I need to have follow up exams?
- How will I know if the cancer has returned? What symptoms should I watch for?
- Will I have to have more imaging tests in the future such as CT scans or MRI scans?
- What blood tests will be needed?
- What are my options if the cancer comes back?

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Other questions I need answered:

In addition to the sample questions above, be sure to write down some of your own. For instance, you might want more information about recovery times so you can plan your work schedule. Or, you may want to ask about second opinions or about clinical trials for which you may qualify. Write your questions below.

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