

Newly Diagnosed: Questions to Ask

After you are diagnosed with cancer, you'll be making many decisions and keeping track of lots of information in the weeks and months ahead. You're likely to have many questions for your doctor and other members of your care team.

We encourage you to bring a friend or family member along to your appointments. They can take notes about your care and answers to your questions. Let your care team know when you don't understand or don't agree with something they've said—they value your openness and honesty. They want you to have all the information you need during your care.

Following are some common questions that patients have as they go through diagnosis and planning treatment. Add your own questions as you think of them.

Questions about my diagnosis

- What is the name of the type of cancer I have?
- What stage is my cancer? What is the grade, if my cancer has one?
- Has the cancer spread to other areas of my body?
- What caused my cancer?
- What other tests do I need before I start treatment? How long will it take to get results from the tests?
- What is my prognosis? Can this cancer be cured or go into remission?

Questions about my treatment

- What kinds of treatments are available to me? What are the pros and cons of each treatment?
- Which treatments do you recommend and why?
- What are the risks of not having these treatments?
- When do I start treatment? How long will treatment last?
- What are the common side effects of my treatment? At what point should I contact my care team outside of my scheduled appointments?
- Will I be in pain? How can I manage the pain?
- What are the long-term effects of treatment?
- How will I know if the treatment is working or not? What are my options if this treatment doesn't work?
- Are there any clinical trials that are right for me?

Questions about caring for myself

- Can I exercise during tests and treatment?
- How will treatment change my ability to work or continue with my usual daily activities?
- Would acupuncture, yoga, or naturopathic medicine help with my side effects or well-being?
- What should I do if I get depressed or so anxious that I can't do anything?
- Are there changes I should make to my diet?
- What can my family and loved ones expect?

Other questions I have