

# Pancreatic Cancer: Treatment Questions



Talking with healthcare providers about your cancer can be overwhelming. It can be hard to take in all the information. It helps to be prepared. Make a list of questions and bring them to your appointments. Write down the answers in a notebook. Make sure you ask how the treatment might change your daily life, including your diet, and how you will look and feel after treatment. Ask how successful the treatment is expected to be and what the risks and possible side effects are. You may also want to ask a friend or family member to go with you. They can take notes and write down the answers and also ask questions you may not think of. You can also ask your healthcare provider if you can record the conversation.

Below are some questions to ask during your appointments. Not all of these might apply to your situation, but asking the questions that do apply can help you get a better idea of what to expect.

## Deciding on a treatment

- What type of pancreatic cancer do I have? Where is it?
- Has the cancer spread? If so, where has it spread to?
- Do I need any more tests before we decide on treatment?
- What are my treatment options?
- What treatment do you think is best for me? Why?
- Will the treatment affect my ability to become pregnant? Are there resources available if I have questions?
- What are the goals of treatment?
- What is the success rate of this particular treatment for my type and stage of cancer?
- What is the average life expectancy for someone with my stage of cancer getting treatment?
- How much experience do you have treating cancers like mine?
- Should I get a second opinion? How do I go about doing that?
- Do I need to see any other healthcare providers?
- Who can help me if I have concerns about the costs and insurance coverage for my diagnosis and treatment?
- Are there any clinical trials I should look into?

## Getting ready for treatment

- How soon do I need to start treatment?
- How long will each treatment take?
- Where do I have to go for the treatment?
- Who will give me the treatment?
- Does someone need to go with me during treatments?

- Can I drive myself or take public transportation to treatment?
- Do you have someone on staff who can help me with transportation or other resources?
- Can I take my other medicines during treatment?
- How long will I be in treatment?

## Coping during treatment

- How will I feel during and after the treatment?
- Will I be able to go to work and be around my family during treatment?
- What side effects can I expect?
- How long will side effects last?
- Will treatment affect what I can eat? Do I need to change my diet?
- Is exercise safe during treatment? Are there any limits on what type I can do?
- Could the treatment affect my desire and ability to have sex?
- Will there be side effects I need to call you about?
- What number do I call? After office hours? On weekends and holidays?
- What can I do to ease the side effects?
- Is there a counselor available for me or my family to talk with?
- Are there support groups nearby or online that I can join?

## After treatment

- How will I feel after the treatment?
- What type of follow-up will I need after treatment?
- Will I need any type of rehabilitation therapy after treatment?
- How will we know if treatment worked?
- What are my options if the treatment doesn't work or the cancer comes back?

## Making a decision

When you have answers from your healthcare provider, it's time to think about your preferences. Think about what side effects you can and can't tolerate. Talk about all of your concerns with your healthcare provider before making a decision about treatment. You may want to get a second opinion and also get feedback from family and friends.

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