

Oral Cancer: Treatment Questions



Talking with healthcare providers about cancer can be overwhelming. It can be hard to take in all of the information. It helps to be prepared. Make a list of questions and bring them to your appointments. Write the answers down in a notebook. Make sure you ask how the treatment will 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.

Deciding on a treatment

- What kind of oral cancer do I have? Where is it?
- What is the stage of my cancer?
- Has the cancer spread from where it started?
- What treatments do you think are best for me and why?
- Will I have trouble swallowing, eating, or speaking after treatment? Will I lose teeth?
- Will I look different?
- Will the treatment affect my ability to have children?
- What is the success rate of this treatment for my type and stage of oral cancer?
- What is the life expectancy for someone with my stage of cancer receiving this treatment?
- How do I go about getting a second opinion?
- Are there any clinical trials I should look into?

Getting ready for treatment

- How long is the treatment period?
- How long will each treatment take?
- Who will give me the treatment?
- Where do I have to go for the treatment?
- Does someone need to go with me to the treatments?
- Will the treatment affect how I look or how I use my mouth? If so, what can be done to help?
- During treatment, will I be able to go to work and be around my family?
- Will I be able to drive myself or take public transportation to treatment? Is there someone who can help me with transportation problems?

- Should I change my diet? What foods will I not be able to eat?
- Can you help me quit smoking?
- Can you help me stop drinking alcohol?
- Can I take my other medicines during the treatment period?
- How will I feel after the treatment?
- Is there someone on staff who can help me with financial problems and other resources?

Coping during treatment

- What side effects can I expect?
- How long will side effects last?
- What can I do to ease the side effects?
- Are there side effects that I need to call you about?
- How do I reach you after hours and on holidays and weekends?
- What can I do to ease the side effects?
- 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?
- How will we know if treatment worked?

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