

Cancer of Unknown Primary: Newly Diagnosed



Being told you have cancer of unknown primary (CUP) can be scary, and you may have many questions. But you have people on your healthcare team to help.

Coping with fear

It's normal to feel afraid and uncertain. You're facing a lot of unknowns and maybes. This can make it extra hard to deal with cancer. Learning as much as you can about the cancer and about the treatment options you have can make you feel less afraid. It can also help you work with your healthcare team and make the best choices for your treatment. You can also ask to speak with a counselor.

Working with your healthcare team

To decide the best course of treatment, your healthcare provider needs to learn as much as they can about the cancer. Even if they can't figure out where the cancer first started, there are other things that can help guide treatment, like tumor markers and gene or protein changes in the cancer cells. Learning these details will include getting a lot of tests and maybe working with more than one healthcare provider.

Your healthcare team might include:

- **Oncologist.** This healthcare provider specializes in treating cancer.
- **Medical oncologist.** This healthcare provider specializes in treating cancer with medicines.
- **Radiation oncologist.** This healthcare provider specializes in treating cancer with radiation.
- **Surgical oncologist (oncologic surgeon).** This healthcare provider uses surgery to treat cancer.
- **Pathologist.** This healthcare provider has extra training in using lab tests to find cell changes and diagnose diseases.

Other members of your team will be oncology nurses, a social worker, dietitian, counselor, pharmacist, and more. They'll answer any questions you have. They'll help you through each of the steps you'll take before, during, and after treatment. Your team will let you know what tests you need and the results of those tests. They'll guide you in making treatment decisions. They'll also help prepare you and your loved ones for what's ahead.

You may want to get a second opinion to confirm your diagnosis and find out more about treatment options. Your team can help you do this, too. For the most part, taking some time to learn as much as you can and make an informed decision about the best treatment for you will not hurt your chance of the treatment working. And it can help you feel comfortable with your plan moving forward.

Learning about treatment options

Remember, it's more important to make an informed decision than a quick one. You should get all the information you can to help make the decision. It can also help you know what to expect from treatment and from your cancer care team.

Getting support

Coping with cancer can be very stressful. Talk with your healthcare team about seeing a counselor. They can refer you to someone who can help. You can also visit support groups to talk with other people coping with cancer. Ask your healthcare team about local or online support groups.

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