

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT CANCER

Getting a cancer diagnosis can feel overwhelming, and it's completely normal to have lots of questions. Talking to your doctor can help you understand what's happening and what steps to take next.

General Questions

- **What type of cancer do I have?** Knowing the exact name of your cancer can help you understand your condition better.
- **How fast is my cancer growing?** This helps you grasp how urgently treatment might be needed.
- **Where exactly is the cancer in my body?** It's important to know the specific areas affected so you can discuss targeted treatments.
- **Can my cancer be cured, or is the focus on managing it?** This will give you an idea of your treatment goals and what to expect.

Questions About Tests

- **What's involved in this test?** Get a clear picture of what to expect, from preparation to the procedure itself.
- **What will this test tell us?** Understanding the purpose of the test helps you see how it fits into your overall treatment plan.
- **What are the benefits and risks of this test?** Knowing this will help you weigh the pros and cons before going ahead.
- **Will the results of this test change my treatment plan?** Find out how the results might influence the next steps in your care.
- **Are there any costs for this test?** It's helpful to know if you'll be responsible for any expenses related to the test.

Questions About Treatment and Costs

- **What's the goal of each treatment?** Are we aiming to cure, control, or just relieve symptoms? This helps you understand the purpose of your treatments.
- **How will this treatment affect my daily life?** Ask about how the treatment might impact your work, relationships, and activities.
- **What will this treatment cost me?** Clarify any financial aspects so you're prepared for what's ahead.
- **Can I get help with covering the costs?** Look into options for financial assistance or support programs.
- **Will this treatment affect my ability to have children?** If relevant, it's important to know about any impact on your fertility.
- **What side effects should I expect?** Understanding potential side effects helps you prepare and manage them better.
- **Are there other therapies I can use alongside this treatment?** Explore additional options that might complement your main treatment.
- **Who will be on my treatment team?** Knowing who's involved in your care can help you feel more supported.
- **Are there any clinical trials that might be right for me?** Clinical trials can offer new treatment options, so ask if there are any available.

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If Your Cancer is Advanced

- **What treatments can help with my symptoms?** Focus on ways to feel more comfortable and manage any issues you're facing.
- **Who will handle my ongoing care?** Make sure you know who to contact for your regular medical needs.
- **What support can my family and friends get?** Find out what resources are available to help your loved ones support you.
- **How can I access palliative care?** Palliative care focuses on comfort and quality of life, so ask how to access these services.

Questions About Clinical Trials

- **Are there any clinical trials that could be a good fit for me?** Trials might offer additional treatment options, so it's worth asking about them.
- **What would participating in a trial involve?** Understand what's required if you choose to join a clinical trial.
- **What are the possible benefits and risks?** Weigh the potential upsides and downsides of participating in a trial.
- **Can I say no to a trial if I change my mind?** You should feel free to withdraw if a trial doesn't feel right for you.
- **Is participating in a trial important for me or others?** Learn about the impact of the trial on your care and the broader community.

Get the Inside Scoop on Your Care

- **Stay Informed:** Make sure you understand all the details about your treatment. It's important to know exactly what's happening and why.
- **Choose What's Best for You:** Ask questions so you can make the best choice from the treatment options available. It's your health, and you deserve to feel confident about the decisions being made.
- **Don't Be Shy:** If something isn't clear or you're feeling unsure, speak up! Your healthcare team is there to help you and answer any questions you have.
- **Involve Your Family:** Encourage your loved ones to ask questions too. It's okay to have them be part of the decision-making process if you want them involved.
- **Keep the Conversation Going:** How you want to be involved in your treatment decisions might change, so let your doctor know what you prefer and keep them updated.