



Diagnosis

When You're Told You Have Cancer

1. What type of cancer do I have? Where is the cancer located?
2. What is the stage of the cancer? How will staging be used to decide on the best type of treatment?
3. Has the cancer spread to my lymph nodes or any other parts of my body?
4. Can you explain my pathology report?
5. Will I need other tests or procedures before we can decide on treatment? What will we learn from these tests?
6. Is any preparation required for these tests or procedures? Where do I need to go for these tests? When and how will I receive the test results?
7. Is biomarker or molecular testing available for my type of cancer? How will test results affect my treatment plan?

8. Is this type of cancer genetic? Are other members of my family at risk? Should I consider genetic testing?
9. What resources do you recommend so that I can learn more about my cancer, treatment options and next steps?



Treatment Planning

Understanding Options

1. What are my treatment options? What are the risks and benefits of each option? (You can use the **Understanding My Treatment Options** template in the **myToolBox** section to help you map out the different options.)
2. Am I eligible for any clinical trials? Where are they located? (For a complete overview of clinical trials and additional questions, please refer to the **Clinical Trials** chapter.)
3. Which treatments or combination of treatments do you recommend? Why? What is the treatment goal?

4. What are the short and long-term side effects of this treatment? How are these side effects treated? Is there anything I can do to be proactive to prevent the side effects or help the treatment work better?

5. What is the expected timeline for my treatment? How soon do I need to begin treatment and/or make decisions on next steps?

6. Where will treatment be done? Hospital? Outpatient clinic? Location near my home?

7. How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work? Exercise? Perform my usual activities?

8. Could this treatment affect my ability to become pregnant or have children? If so, can you recommend a fertility specialist or reproductive endocrinologist before starting treatment? *(You can find a list of additional questions to ask about fertility at the end of this chapter.)*

9. Will I lose my hair? Will any of the treatments hurt? Will I have any scars? Do I have an option for placement of the scar?



10. Do I need someone to accompany me or will I be able to drive to and from treatment sessions on my own?

11. How much will I have to pay for treatment? What will my insurance cover? Who can I speak to about the costs of treatment and insurance concerns?

12. I am interested in getting a second opinion. Can you provide a recommendation?



1. How will we know if the treatment is working?

2. Will I need additional tests and follow-up during my treatment? How often?

3. What symptoms or side effects should I expect? What should I tell you about right away? Is there anything I can do to help manage the side effects?



4. Who should I call with questions or concerns during non-business hours?

5. Are there any lifestyle changes I should make before or during treatment?

6. Do I need to change what I eat during treatment? Is there anything I should stay away from?

7. What kind of exercises can I do? How often? Are there any limitations?



Support

1. What support services do you recommend for me? My family? Can you recommend a social worker to help locate support services?

2. Can you recommend a support group where I can talk to another cancer patient or thriver (someone who has been through cancer)?

3. If I start to feel overwhelmed or depressed, can you suggest a health care professional I can speak to?



After Treatment
Follow-up Care

1. What is the chance that the cancer will come back? What specific signs or symptoms should I watch for?

2. How long will it take for me to feel better and more like myself? When will side effects go away?

3. What long-term side effects or health issues are possible based on the cancer treatment I received? How can I manage these issues?

4. What follow-up tests will I need? How often will I need them?

5. Are there any lifestyle changes I should make to be healthy after treatment? Do I need a special diet or supplements after treatment?

6. What kind of exercise do you recommend for me? Are there any limits on what I can do?

7. Who will be managing my follow-up care? Are there other doctors I should see for follow-up care?

8. Who can I talk to if I have trouble coping with the changes in my life?

9. How do I get a treatment summary and survivorship care plan for my personal records?



Fertility

Cancer treatments may affect sexual and reproductive function, which can affect your ability to have children in the future. If you have any concerns, talk to your doctor BEFORE you have treatment so that you can explore your options. Your doctor may recommend a fertility specialist or reproductive endocrinologist, who can talk to you about fertility preservation options, such as freezing sperm, eggs or ovarian tissue before you begin treatment. Additional options may include surrogacy, a gestational carrier, adoption, etc. Here are a few questions you might want to consider asking:

1. What is the risk of temporary or permanent infertility as a result of treatments?

2. Are there other effective treatments that might not cause fertility issues?

3. What fertility preservation option(s) would you recommend for me? What will this cost?

4. Will any of the fertility preservation options delay the start of treatment or make my cancer treatment less effective? If yes, could this affect my recovery or prognosis?

5. Do I need to abstain from sex during cancer treatment? Will I need to use contraception to prevent pregnancy during cancer treatment (e.g. birth control)?

6. How will I know if I am fertile after cancer treatment? How long might it take for my fertility to return? After cancer treatment, how long should I wait to conceive?

7. Can you recommend support for me and/or my partner to help us cope with any fertility issues?