

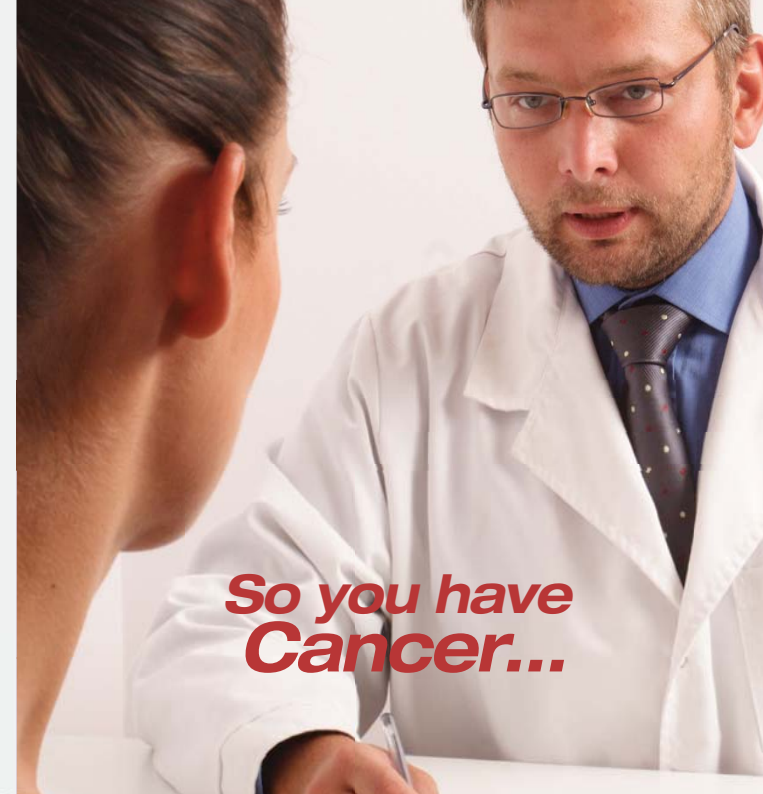
asking questions is important

Write down any questions you may think of that are not listed inside



The University of Sydney

Please keep this question list as it will be useful for you and your family in future consultations.



So you have Cancer...



This resource was produced by the Medical Psychology Research Unit at Sydney University with funding from the Cancer Institute NSW.

questions to ask your medical or radiation oncologist



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When you see your medical or radiation oncologist today you may have questions and concerns. Often these are forgotten in the heat of the moment, only to be remembered later. We have compiled a list of questions to help you to get the information you want from your oncologist about your illness, and possible treatments.

These questions have been developed after discussion with many people. Your oncologist is keen to answer any questions you may have, either now or at future consultations. You and your family may choose to use this list at any time.

We suggest you tick the questions that you want to ask and write down any that you may think of which are not listed. In many cases, your oncologist will have answered the questions without you even asking, and in that instance this pamphlet can serve as a checklist.

HOW AND WHEN TO ASK QUESTIONS

- Do you have time today to discuss my questions?
- Can I ask you to explain any words that I am not familiar with?

DIAGNOSIS

- What kind of cancer do I have?
- Where is the cancer at the moment? Has it spread to other parts of my body?
- How common is my cancer?

TESTS

- Are there any further tests that I need to have? What will they tell us? Will they confirm my diagnosis?
- What will I experience when having the test/s?

PROGNOSIS

- How bad is this cancer and what is it going to mean for me?
- What symptoms will the cancer cause?
- What is the aim of the treatment? To cure the cancer or to control it and manage symptoms?
- How likely is it that the cancer will spread to other parts of my body without any more treatment?



- How likely is it that the cancer will spread to other parts of my body if I do have more treatment?
- What is the expected survival for people with my type of cancer?
- Is the treatment going to improve my chance of survival?
- How likely is it that the treatment will improve my symptoms? Is it worth going through?
- Will the treatment or illness reduce my sexual drive?

OPTIMAL CARE

- Do you specialise in treating my type of cancer?
- How well established is the treatment you are recommending?
- Are there guidelines on how to treat my cancer?
- Is there another specialist who treats this type of cancer that you recommend for a second opinion?

THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM

- Do you work in a multi-disciplinary team and what does this mean?
- Can you explain the advantages of a team approach?
- How do you all communicate with each other and me?
- Who will be in charge of my care?
- What do I do if I get conflicting information?

TREATMENT INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

Options

- Is it necessary to have treatment right now?
- If so, do I have a choice of treatments?
- What are the pros and cons of each treatment option?
- What can I expect if I decide not to have treatment?
- How much time do I have to think about this? Do you need my decision today?
- What is your opinion about the best treatment for me?

Treatment

- What exactly will be done during the treatment and how will it affect me? When are these effects likely to happen?
- What is the treatment schedule, e.g. how many treatments will I have, how often, and for how long will I have treatment?
- Where will I have the treatment?
- Are there any advantages/disadvantages of the private versus public health system?

Clinical Trials

- What are clinical trials? Are there any that might be relevant for me?
- Will I be treated any differently if I enrol in a trial?

Preparing for Treatment

- Is there anything that I can do before or after my treatment that might make it more effective, e.g. diet, work, exercise, etc?
- What are the do's and don'ts while having treatment?
- What problems should I look out for and who do I contact if they occur?
- Are there long-term side effects from the treatment?
- Will I need any additional treatment after this? If so, what might that be?
- What is my long-term follow up plan?

Costs

- What will be the costs throughout my treatment, e.g. medication, chemotherapy, etc?
- Am I eligible for any benefits if I cannot work?

Support Information

- What information is available about my cancer and its treatment, e.g. books, videos, websites, etc?
- Are there any complementary therapies that you believe may be helpful or that are known to be bad for me?
- Is there someone I can talk to who has been through this treatment?
- Are there services/support groups that can help me and my family deal with this illness?