

Questions to Ask About Cancer Care

Are you unsure what questions to ask your cancer care providers? If so, you're not alone. Since many people don't know what to ask, NCCN has created lists of questions that can help you get the most out of your time with your provider.

Read the following pages and mark which questions you want to ask at your next visit. You may want to add questions of your own after talking to experienced people who know your situation.



Questions about cancer testing

- 1. What tests will I have?
- 2. Do the tests have any risks?
- 3. Do I need to do anything to prepare for testing?
- 4. Should I bring someone with me to the appointments?
- 5. Where do I go for testing, and how long will it take?
- 6. If any of the tests will hurt, what will you do to make me comfortable?
- 7. How soon will I know the results and who will explain them to me?
- 8. How can I get a copy of the pathology report and other test results?
- 9. Is there an online portal with my test results?

Add questions of your own or take notes in the space below.

Questions about treatment options

1. What are my treatment options?
2. What will happen if I do nothing?
3. Are you suggesting options other than what NCCN recommends? If yes, why?
4. How do my age, sex, overall health, and other factors affect my options?
5. What if I am pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning to become pregnant?
6. Does any option offer a cure or long-term cancer control?
7. How do I get a second opinion?
8. How long do I have to decide about treatment, and is there a social worker or someone who can help me decide?

Add questions of your own or take notes in the space below.

Questions about clinical trials

1. Do you recommend that I consider a clinical trial?
2. How do I find clinical trials that I can participate in?
3. What is being tested in the clinical trial? Has it been used for other cancers?
4. What are the risks and benefits of participating?
5. How long will I be in the clinical trial?
6. Will I be able to get other treatment if this doesn't work?
7. Will the clinical trial cost me anything?

Add questions of your own or take notes in the space below.

Questions about side effects

- 1. What are the possible side effects of treatment?
- 2. Does the cancer itself cause any side effects?
- 3. Which side effects are most common and how long do they usually last?
- 4. Which side effects are serious or life-threatening?
- 5. Are there any long-term or permanent side effects?
- 6. What symptoms should I report right away, and who do I contact?
- 7. What can I do to prevent or relieve the side effects of treatment?
- 8. Do any medications worsen side effects?
- 9. Will you stop or change treatment if there are serious side effects?

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Questions about what to expect

1. Does this hospital or cancer center offer the best treatment for me?
2. Do I have a choice of when to begin treatment?
3. How long will treatment last?
4. Who should I contact with questions or concerns if the office is closed?
5. How will you know if treatment is working?
6. What are the chances of the cancer worsening or returning?
7. What follow-up care is needed after treatment?

Add questions of your own or take notes in the space below.

Questions about resources and support

- 1. Who can I talk to about help with housing, food, and other basic needs?
- 2. What assistance is available for transportation, childcare, and home care?
- 3. Who can tell me what my options for health insurance are and assist me with applying for insurance coverage?
- 4. How much will I have to pay for my treatment? What help is available to pay for medicines and other treatment?
- 5. Who can help me with my concerns about work or school?
- 6. How can I connect with others and build a support system?
- 7. Who can I talk to if I don't feel safe at home, at work, or in my neighborhood?

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About Questions to Ask

The questions in this resource came from the library of NCCN Guidelines for Patients®. These award-winning books will prepare you to talk with your providers about the best options for you. They are reviewed by NCCN experts and patient advocates.

Updated July 2024

For more details and the full library of patient and caregiver resources, visit

[NCCN.org/patients](https://www.nccn.org/patients)

For a list of NCCN Cancer Centers, visit

[NCCN.org/CancerCenters](https://www.nccn.org/CancerCenters)

NCCN patient resources are supported by funding from NCCN Foundation®.

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