

Questions to Ask Your Doctor if You Have Cancer

Understanding the Diagnosis

- ■ What type of cancer do I have?
- ■ Where exactly is the cancer located?
- ■ What stage is my cancer, and what does that mean for me?
- ■ Has the cancer spread beyond the original site?
- ■ How aggressive is this type of cancer?
- ■ What are the biomarkers, mutations, or genetic features of my cancer (if tested)?
- ■ How reliable are the tests that confirmed my diagnosis? Should I get a second opinion?

Treatment Options

- ■ What are all of my treatment options?
- ■ Which treatment do you recommend, and why?
- ■ What is the goal of treatment: cure, control, or symptom relief?
- ■ Are there less aggressive or experimental options worth considering?
- ■ What are the chances of success with each option?
- ■ What are the risks and side effects of each treatment?
- ■ How will treatment affect my daily life, work, and family?
- ■ Are there oral therapies, or will I need surgery, radiation, or IV treatments?
- ■ Is a clinical trial appropriate for me?
- ■ How soon do I need to start treatment?

Prognosis & Outcomes

- ■ Based on my case, what is the likely outcome (prognosis)?
- ■ How will you measure whether treatment is working?
- ■ What factors might improve or worsen my prognosis?
- ■ What is the risk of recurrence, and how is that monitored?

Side Effects & Quality of Life

- ■ What short-term side effects should I expect?
- ■ What long-term or permanent side effects are possible?
- ■ Will treatment affect my ability to have children?
- ■ How will treatment affect my immune system?
- ■ How can I manage nausea, fatigue, or pain?
- ■ Will I need changes to my diet or lifestyle?

Daily Life Considerations

- ■ Can I continue working or exercising during treatment?
- ■ Will I need someone to help me at home?
- ■ How often will I need to visit the hospital or clinic?

- ■ Are there restrictions on travel, diet, or activities?

Supportive & Palliative Care

- ■ What resources are available for emotional and psychological support?
- ■ Can I speak with a nutritionist, physical therapist, or counselor?
- ■ At what point should palliative care or pain management be considered?
- ■ Are there local or online support groups for my cancer type?

Financial & Practical Matters

- ■ How much will treatment cost, and will my insurance cover it?
- ■ Are there financial assistance programs or patient advocates available?
- ■ What happens if I can't work during treatment?

Follow-up & Long-Term Care

- ■ How often will I need follow-up visits after treatment?
- ■ What scans, blood work, or monitoring will be done?
- ■ What signs or symptoms should I watch for after treatment?
- ■ How will you decide if additional treatment is needed later?

Second Opinions & Next Steps

- ■ Should I get a second opinion, and can you recommend a specialist?
- ■ What hospitals or cancer centers have the best outcomes for my type of cancer?
- ■ What should I do now to prepare myself physically and mentally for treatment?