



## Questions to Ask My Doctor

These questions are things you may want to ask about when visiting your doctor. Not every question will apply to you, nor may you want to know the answers to all of them up front. They are meant to be food for thought when thinking of questions to ask your doctor, either at the initial visit or further along in treatment.

### Questions to ask when making an appointment:

- Is this doctor certified and licensed in this area (medical, radiation or surgical oncology)?
- Is he or she a member of any professional societies?
- Do you have a multidisciplinary clinic for my type of cancer (this is a clinic where you would see several doctors in one visit)?

### Questions about the disease and treatment:

- What type of cancer do I have?
- What stage is my cancer?
- How many patients have you treated with my type of cancer?
- What treatments are considered the gold standard for my cancer and what other options do I have?
- Does this facility have access to all of these treatments?
- If not where are these treatments located?
- Are there other possible treatments that are not available at this facility?
- What are the pros and cons and side effects of these treatment options? What are the expected survival rates with these treatments?
- Are these treatments covered by my insurance plan?
- Will receiving this treatment prevent me from receiving a different type of treatment in the future if I need it?
- Are there any more tests that need to be done before starting treatment?
- What tests will determine how my disease responds to the treatment?
- How often will these tests be done during and after treatment?
- Will you change my treatment if it does not appear to be working?
- How long will the treatment last?
- How often will I see you during and after treatment?
- What signs or symptoms should I bring to your attention to help you observe my treatment and evaluate my response to treatment?

### **Questions about prognosis and survival:**

- Do you expect a cure from these treatments?
- If not, what is the goal of therapy?
- What percentage of patients with my type of tumor live five years or more?

### **Questions about the team:**

- Do you work closely with other members of the cancer care team, such as radiation therapy, surgical and medical oncology, dietician, social work and nursing?
- Do I have access to a dietician at this facility?
- Do I have access to a social worker at this facility?
- Are there any support groups available at this facility?
- What other services are available to help me and my family deal with the disease?

### **Once a treatment is chosen:**

- What are the expected side effects?
- What problems should I report to you? (fever, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, etc.)
- How do I reach someone for problems in the evening or on the weekends?
- What can I do to prevent or control these side effects?
- Can I drive myself to and from the treatment?
- Do I need to take any special precautions at home (in regards to children, pets)?
- Will I be able to continue my normal activities/can I go to work?
- Will this therapy affect my sex life or my ability to have children?
- Do I need a special diet during or after my treatment?
- Do you have any written materials concerning my treatment?
- Can you recommend any websites concerning my treatment?

*These questions were taken from Oncolink and contributed by Carolyn Vachani, RN, MSN, AOCN*

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