



BE PREPARED: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM

The Cancer Support Community (CSC) provides support, education and hope to people affected by metastatic breast cancer through its *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Metastatic Breast Cancer* and other support programs.

If you have metastatic breast cancer, you know it can be scary. Many people say they feel uncertain about the future and overwhelmed by frequent medical visits. You can take steps to feel more in control and better able to cope. Use this worksheet to: 1) get organized before medical appointments, and 2) write down your goals for treatment.

At each visit, bring a list of questions and be prepared to talk about:

1. **What you are most worried about** – use this space to write down your biggest concerns: _____

2. **Your symptoms** – since your last appointment, are your symptoms:

- Better
- About the same
- Worse
- Different in some way or do you have new symptoms since your last appointment

(Explain: _____)

3. **How your cancer or cancer-related treatments interfere with your life** – are you able to:

	not at all	occasionally	most of the time	all of the time
Work (fulfill job responsibilities)				
Sleep				
Think clearly				
Stay emotionally healthy				
Be social/enjoy hobbies				
Be sexually intimate				
Other:				

4. **How you are managing symptoms/side effects:**

Symptom/side effect	What are you doing to manage it?
Extreme tiredness	
Pain	
Difficulty thinking/memory	
Anxiety/depression	
Swelling	
Shortness of breath	
Reduced libido/sex drive	
Nausea/vomiting/loss of appetite	
Other:	

Ask whom you should contact if you have a problem in between appointments. Find out the best way to communicate with them (phone, fax, email, patient portal).



The more you can talk with your doctor and health team about the things that matter most to you about your cancer treatment, the better you'll feel.

TEAMING UP TO MAKE TREATMENT DECISIONS THAT ARE RIGHT FOR YOU

Because of the nature of metastatic breast cancer, even if your treatment is working now, you may need to reassess your options at some point. Partner with your health care team to weigh your options, including if and when to consider a clinical trial.

Take stock of and map out your goals for treatment.

Think about and write down your goals. How do you hope your treatment will improve your physical health and general well-being? What about goals for your personal life and/or ability to work?

What is your main goal/what do you want to be able to do?	
Physical or general health	<i>For example: sleep better, get my appetite back, exercise or chase after my grandkids.</i>
Personal (social, family, hobbies, emotional well-being)	<i>For example: attend an upcoming family event, not be so sad anymore, be intimate with my partner.</i>
Work	<i>For example: be more present at my job, improve my concentration, limit time away from work.</i>
Other:	

OTHER THINGS YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT

- Have there been changes in your general health or well-being since your last visit?
- What you are most concerned or scared about? With whom are you able to share these concerns?
- Key questions you have related to your cancer, its treatments and/or specific options for care (check out CSC's *Open to Options* program to help organize your thoughts)
- Your goals for treatment – remember, these may change over time



A SERVICE of the CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY 

CSC's Open to Options™ Can Help

Making decisions about cancer treatment can be overwhelming. Sometimes it's hard to know what questions to ask the doctor.

But *Open to Options* – CSC's decision support counseling program – can help.

A trained specialist will help you develop a personal list of questions and concerns. You can then share this list with your providers before or at your appointment. Find out more by visiting www.cancersupportcommunity.org or call our toll free helpline at 1-888-793-9355.

Remember, YOU are the most important part of your team. Your providers want to help you, but they only know what you tell them. Take time to clarify and prioritize your goals and concerns. They may be able to adjust their treatment recommendations and also point you to other helpful resources.



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