

Making a decision about cancer treatment can be an overwhelming experience for many people. Important decisions need to be made about treatment for new or recurrent cancer as well as ending treatment. Sometimes it is hard to know what questions to ask the doctor. One proven strategy for getting the most out of your visit is to be as prepared as possible. Having a written list of questions can help you feel more organized and comfortable in asking the questions you need to have answered as you work together with your doctor to make a decision about which treatment is right for you.



www.CancerSupportCommunity.org
1-888-793-9355



As you look at all the treatment options with your oncologist and your family, you will need to determine what you can realistically expect from treatment. Talk with your doctor to better understand your type and stage of cancer as well as what your doctor feels is the best goal of treatment for you. A goal of treatment may be cure, slowing or controlling tumor growth, or extending your life while maintaining quality of life. Some cancer treatments are designed to control pain and other symptoms when a cure is not possible. Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation can have difficult side effects, so it's important for you to weigh the benefits and the challenges, and make a decision that is best for you. Cancer treatments today have come along way from years ago. There are many medications that reduce side effects and make it possible for you to continue to work or keep up with your usual activities.

The Cancer Support Community has a decision support counseling program called Open to Options[®] that can help you prepare for an appointment in which you will be making a treatment decision. Using this service can help you get the most out of your visit with the oncologist and help you talk more openly with your health care team about the things that really matter to you the most in relation to your cancer treatment. In a brief one-hour session, an Open to Options[®] Specialist can help you develop a personal list of questions and concerns that will help you and doctor explore your situation and develop the best treatment option.

Check with your local Cancer Support Community affiliate if this free service is available today or call 1-888-793-9355 to schedule an appointment by phone. You can also visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/OpenToOptions for more information.

TIPS FOR TREATMENT DECISION-MAKING

- ✓ **Learn about your cancer and treatment options.** Try and understand as much as you can about your diagnosis and the possible treatments. There are excellent booklets and online information available through the Cancer Support Community, the National Cancer Institute, and many other organizations to help you get more informed.
- ✓ **Bring someone else along.** Bring a family member or friend along to listen along with you, take notes and keep track of the options.
- ✓ **Talk about your decision with someone you trust.** It can be helpful to talk through your ideas and concerns with family, friends, clergy, or health professional. Some people find that support groups are a useful place to gather information and suggestions from others.
- ✓ **Consult guidelines or other decision-making tools.** The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and other cancer organizations publish guidelines and treatment decision-making tools to help doctors and patients understand various treatments. In addition, some cancer centers offer sophisticated statistical tools you can use with your doctor to help determine the best treatment option based on your personal medical information. Always use treatment guidelines and other tools with the help and interpretation of your doctor. For more tips on decision-making, download *Frankly Speaking About Cancer: Making Treatment Decisions*.

General Cancer Information, Survivorship & Support

Cancer Support Community • 888-793-9355 • www.CancerSupportCommunity.org

American Cancer Society • 800-227-2345 • www.cancer.org

CancerCare • 800-813-4673 • www.cancercare.org

Cancer.net • 888-651-3038 • www.cancer.net

Caregiver Action Network • 855-227-3640 • www.caregiveraction.org

Healthcare.gov • www.healthcare.gov

Livestrong Foundation • 866-673-7205 • www.livestrong.org

National Cancer Institute • 800-422-6237 • www.cancer.gov

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine • 888-644-6226 • www.nccam.nih.gov

Patient Advocate Foundation • 800-532-5274 • www.patientadvocate.org

CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Cancer Support Community's (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. Call 888-793-9355 or visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org for more info.

Cancer Support Helpline[®]—Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon–Fri, 9 am–9 pm ET.

Open to Options[®]—Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer[®]—Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs.

www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer.

Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs—With the help of 170 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club affiliates provide services free of charge to people touched by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more at a location near you. www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation.

MyLifeLine—CSC's private, online community allows patients and caregivers to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond. Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Sign up at www.MyLifeLine.org.

Grassroots Network—Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate.

Cancer Experience Registry[®]—Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org.

The Cancer Support Community provides this information as a service. This publication is not intended to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor. We strongly suggest consulting your doctor or other health care professionals to answer questions and learn more.

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