
Questions you might ask about your treatment



Deciding on your cancer treatment

- What sort of treatment is recommended for me and why?
- What does the treatment involve?
- How will it help me? What are the benefits for me?
- What will happen if I don't have this treatment?
- Are there any other treatment options for me?
- If I have this treatment, how soon do I need to start or have it?
- Do you need my decision today?
- Where can I have this treatment?
- Are there any differences between this being done in a public or a private hospital/centre?
- What costs are involved? Public and private?
- Do you specialise in treating my type of cancer? How many other people with this same cancer have you treated?
- Is there another specialist who treats this type of cancer that you would recommend for a second opinion?

Before starting and/or during your treatment

- When will treatment start?
- Is there anything I need to do before starting treatment?
- Will I need treatment every day? How long will sessions take?
- How long will I need this treatment for?
- How will the treatment be given or done and by whom?
- Who will arrange the appointments?
- Will this treatment be part of a clinical trial?
- Are there any risks with this treatment? For me/my family, now or later?
- Will this treatment affect my ability to have children?
- How will we know the treatment is working/has worked? Will I need tests? How often will these be done?
- How will I be told of the progress/results of the treatment?
- Can I continue to take my medications as I normally do?
- Is there anything I need to bring with me to treatment sessions/hospital?
- What side effects/symptoms can I expect? How common are these?
- When are these side effects/symptoms likely to happen?
- How do I manage side effects if they develop?
- Who do I call if I feel unwell or experience side effects when I am at home? Can I call this number/person after hours and on weekends?

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Before starting and/or during your treatment

- What can I do to reduce the risk or impact of side effects/symptoms?
- Will I be restricted in any way following the treatment and, if so, for how long?
- Will I be able to maintain my usual activities/work/school?
- Will I be able to drive myself home or does someone need to come with me?
- Will this cancer or the treatment allow me to still be an organ/tissue donor?
- Can I continue with my complementary and alternative therapies (e.g. vitamins/minerals, massage therapy)?
- Is smoking, alcohol or drug use an issue for me while I am undergoing this treatment? Are there any other dos and don'ts?
- Do you have any written information that I could take away to read?

Treatment-specific questions for surgery

- How long will the surgery or operation take?
- Who will perform my operation?
- Is there anything I can do before my surgery to assist my recovery?
- When will I meet the anaesthetist?
- How long will I need to be in hospital?
- How long do people usually take to recover from this operation?
- Will I have scars after surgery? Where will they be/what will they be like?
- When will I be told the results of the operation?
- Can I get a written summary of the operation and results?
- When will I be reviewed following the operation and by whom?
- What symptoms/things do I need to look out for when I go home and who do I contact if they occur?
- Will I have any wounds that will need to be dressed?
- Are there any supports available to assist me on returning home?

Questions if taking an active surveillance approach

- How frequently will I be checked and for how long?
- Who will undertake this surveillance?
- How will we know if the cancer has grown/changed?
- What happens if things progress if I take this approach?
- What treatments could I have if my cancer changes/grows?

Information and specific questions for other cancer treatment types and approaches can be found at www.mycancercarerecord.org.au