

## Support information

- Where can I get more information about my cancer and its treatment e.g. books, DVDs, websites etc?
- Are there any complementary therapies that you believe may be helpful or are there some that might be harmful?
- Is there someone I can talk to who has been through this treatment?
- Are there services/support groups that are able to assist my family and myself cope with this diagnosis and treatment?
- What is my long-term follow-up plan?

## If advanced cancer is diagnosed

- What can I expect to happen?
- What treatments might be available?
- Who will be responsible for my on going care?
- How can my family and/or friends be supported if they care for me at home?
- How do I access palliative/supportive care?

## Asking questions is important

Write down any questions you may think of that are not listed above.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Use this space to record answers to your questions

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

We acknowledge American Cancer Society in the production of this resource.



**13 11 20**  
cancersa.org.au

For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues, call Cancer Council Helpline. This is a free and confidential service available Monday to Friday 8:30 am – 5:30 pm  
202 Greenhill Road  
Eastwood SA 5063  
PO Box 929, Unley BC SA 5061  
t 08 8291 4111  
f 08 8291 4122  
cc@cancersa.org.au  
[www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au)

Reviewed June 2014, next review due June 2016



# Questions you might like to ask your doctor

Information and support

**Cancer Council Helpline**  
**13 11 20**  
[www.cancersa.org.au](http://www.cancersa.org.au)

## There maybe many things to ask

When you visit your doctor you may have many questions. Often these are forgotten in the doctor's office, only to be remembered later.

To help you get the information you want it may help to:

- ask for a longer appointment if you have many questions to ask
- ask a friend or relative to go with you
- write your questions down and take the list with you
- if you have difficulty speaking or understanding English ask for an interpreter or contact the Translating and Interpreting Service 13 14 50.

### Your rights

When cancer is diagnosed you enter into a partnership with your doctor/s and other health professionals in the decisions related to your health. As a patient you have the right to:

- ask questions about your treatment
- be informed about the specific details of your care (including costs)
- be given details about all treatment options in order to make an informed choice
- seek a second medical opinion and/or information from other sources about your diagnosis and treatment.

Each person with cancer is different therefore the health professionals involved in your care are the best people to give you the information specific to you.

## Some questions you might want to ask when you're told you have cancer

- What type of cancer do I have?
- Where is the cancer located?

- Is it slow or fast growing?
- Do you think the cancer has spread from where it started?
- What stage is my cancer? What does that mean for me?
- Is it possible to cure my cancer? If not can it be controlled?
- What are my chances of surviving this cancer?

## Questions about tests

- What will this test involve? What will this tell you?
- Are there any benefits or risks to me in having this test?
- Will the results of this test make any difference to the decision on what type of treatment I have?

## Talking about treatment decisions

- What treatments are available for my type of cancer?
- Do I have a choice of treatments?
- Are there any clinical trials suitable for me?
- What is the aim of this treatment? Is it to cure my cancer, prevent it coming back, prevent it spreading or to relieve symptoms?
- What treatment would you recommend for me?
- Is it necessary to have treatment right now? When do you need my decision?
- How does the treatment work?
- How is the treatment given?
- How will we know if the treatment is working?
- What difference will this treatment make to my quality of life; will I feel unwell? Can I work, drive, have sex, etc?
- What are the possible side effects of treatment? Will I lose my hair?

- Can these side effects be prevented or controlled? Are the effects temporary or permanent?
- Will this treatment affect my ability to have children? Should I see a fertility specialist before I start treatment?
- What if I choose not to have treatment?
- Will there be any out of pocket expenses? Will there be extra expenses not covered by Medicare or my private health fund?
- How do I apply for benefits or access my insurance if I cannot work? Who can I talk to about this?

## Planning for treatment

- Do you specialise in treating my type of cancer?
- Has this treatment been used for a long time or is it new?
- I'm thinking of getting a second opinion before I make my decision. Is there someone you would recommend?
- Will a multidisciplinary team be involved in my care? How will you all communicate with each other and me?
- Who will be in charge of my care?
- Who do I contact if I have questions or if a problem arises?
- Can I work while I have treatment?
- Is there anything I can do that will help me cope with treatment?
- Are there things I shouldn't do while having treatment?
- Should I exercise? How much? What type would you recommend?
- Do I need to follow a special diet?

*NB It is important to let the health care professionals know if you are taking any alternative or complementary therapies when undergoing treatment. Some therapies can interfere with treatment.*