

Talking With Your Doctor



What to Organize for Your Visit

- Write down all your questions and concerns
- Consider bringing a family member or friend to help you
- Bring a list of all your medicines, vitamins, nutritional or herbal supplements, etc.

What to do to be Prepared

Both you and your doctor play important roles in achieving your health goals



- Arrive early enough to complete forms
- Bring insurance card
- As a courtesy, turn off cell phones and pagers

What Contributes to a Successful Conversation?



- Be honest
- Ask your prepared questions
- Take notes
- Sum up the visit in your own words

What? Why? When? Where?



What? Cancer?

- “What type of cancer do I have?”
- “How far along is it and what does this mean for me?”
- “Has it spread any place else?”

What Are My Treatment Options?

- “Considering the type and extent of cancer I have, what treatment options are available?”
- “Am I eligible for any clinical trials for this type of cancer?”
- “How do I and where do I go to get a second opinion?”

What Are Some of the Possible Side Effects?

- “What are some of the side effects of this treatment?”
- “Will my side effects be temporary or long-term?”
- “Could I have side-effects down the road?”
- “What can I do to prevent or lessen the side effects?”

What Type of Support is Available?

- “Where can I find more information on coping with my diagnosis?”
- “Where can I find emotional, psychological and spiritual support?”
- “How can I best minimize the impact of this disease on my family and myself?”

What's Next?

- “Will I need additional tests? And how often?”
- “What will these tests tell me about my cancer?”

What Lies Ahead?

- “Is my disease expected to progress?”
- “Is this type of cancer caused by genetic factors? Are other members of my family at risk?”
- “Who will follow my progress?”

What to do After Each Visit

- Allow yourself time to think about what you learned from your doctor's visit
- Follow your doctor's recommendations
- Prepare for next visit
 - Complete Patient Journal
 - Write new questions, including unresolved questions from prior visits

What If You Have a Problem Talking With Your Doctor?

- Present your concerns honestly, not accusatory
- Request more time to discuss the problem if regular appointment time isn't sufficient

What Are Some Ways to Improve the Situation?



What to Say...

- “I’m concerned that we aren’t communicating well, and here’s why...”
- “I need to be able to talk with you about _____, and I feel like I can’t. Can we discuss this?”
- “I realize that you’re very busy, but I need very much to discuss _____ at more length. Can we schedule a time to do that?”
- “I’m having trouble understanding _____. Can you help me?”

What Are Some Good Communication Tips?

- Listen attentively
- Ask questions
- Treat all staff with respect and trust
- Have reasonable expectations
- Be informed
- Answer questions accurately and completely
- Honestly share your hopes and fears

Talking With Your Doctor

