

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Whether you're dealing with a diagnosis or coping with the side effects of chemotherapy, it's important to know what questions to ask your doctor. With the following questions you'll be better prepared for your next doctor's visit.

About Colorectal Cancer

1. Do I have any of the risk factors that would make me likely to develop colorectal cancer?
2. If I have any of the risk factors, are there any changes I can make to place me at less risk?
3. Should I have any of the tests that would screen me for colorectal cancer?
4. What are the signs and symptoms that I should be aware of?
5. How often should I get a colonoscopy?

About Diagnosis

1. What are the tests that I'll need to determine what stage my cancer is in?
2. What other doctors will I need to see?
3. Will I be able to have at least 12 lymph nodes sampled to help determine my staging and treatment options?

About Treatment

1. Based on the stage of my disease, what is your recommended treatment option?
2. How long will I have to undergo the treatment?
3. How long does each course of the treatment take?
4. What are the benefits of this treatment?
5. What are the potential side effects of this treatment?
6. Is combination chemotherapy a treatment option that is appropriate for me?
7. If I decide to receive combination chemotherapy, what is my chance of remaining disease-free?
8. If I decide not to receive combination chemotherapy, what is my chance of remaining disease-free?
9. Are there any "high-risk" features of my tumor that make it more important for me to consider combination chemotherapy?
10. Is a clinical trial appropriate for my situation?

Questions for your doctor cont'd

About Chemotherapy

1. What is chemotherapy?
2. How is chemotherapy given?
3. What can I expect from my therapy?
4. How long will I be on chemotherapy?
5. How will I feel during chemotherapy?
6. How will I know if the treatment is working?
7. What are the side effects, and how long do they last?
(Be sure to discuss any side effects you experience with your doctor)
8. What are my chances for remission or for a longer life?

About Managing Treatment

1. Is there any way I can anticipate what my chemotherapy side effects will be?
2. What happens if my side effects prevent me from taking my medications?
3. What can I do to help prevent the fatigue I may experience?
4. Will I lose my hair as a result of my chemotherapy?