

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT TREATMENT

Comprehensive palliative and supportive care

Palliative care, also called supportive care, is often confused with hospice care, but they are not the same. The goal of palliative medicine is to improve the quality of life and well-being of patients dealing with a serious illness by preventing and treating symptoms of the disease or the side effects of its treatment. Palliative care should be part of every cancer patient's care plan from diagnosis, through all stages of treatment, as well as after treatment ends. This list can help you think about what types of questions you might want to ask your doctor during a discussion about palliative care.

Some things to note:

- Remember to thank the doctor for their time.
- You may not need to ask all of these questions, and there may be questions you want to ask that are not on this list. We encourage you to print out this list and write down any other questions ahead of time.
- Be sure to take notes during your appointment to help you remember important information.
- Bring someone along with you to your doctor visits to take notes, help process the information, and clarify any questions or concerns.

Questions about palliative care

1. What are my palliative care options and when can I start receiving this care? (e.g., pain management, physical and occupational therapy, psychiatry, nutrition, counseling, etc.)
2. Who are the palliative medicine specialists that will be part of my care team?
3. For cancer treatment doctors: How will you communicate with my palliative medicine specialists to ensure my quality of life concerns are addressed?

4. For palliative specialists: How will you communicate with my cancer treatment team to stay informed about the current status of my treatment?
5. What types of medications are available to relieve my pain? Are there any non-pharmacological therapies available that can also help control my pain?
6. Who can I talk to about mental and emotional stress, depression, or anxiety, if needed?
7. How can I continue to access palliative care after my main cancer treatments are complete?