

# Advocating for Yourself: A Guide for Cancer Patients



**MASONIC CANCER CENTER**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Office of  
Community Outreach  
& Engagement



# Cancer Patient Advocacy

Today's patients are taking greater control of their health. We strongly encourage patients to be actively engaged as a member of their healthcare team. We embrace a patient-centered approach to medicine:

- Keep patients informed
- Reduce anxiety
- Improve outcomes

**YOU** are a member of your healthcare team.

**Be Proactive. Ask Questions.**



# Questions to Ask Your Cancer Care Team

## General Information

What type of cancer do I have and where is it located?

What lifestyle changes should I consider?

- Diet
- Exercise
- Rest

Where can I get more information about this type of cancer?

Can I speak to a patient advocate?



## Symptoms

What are some common symptoms of this type of cancer?

What are the treatment options for my symptoms?

Will certain activities make my symptoms worse?



## Staging

Has cancer spread to other parts of my body?

What stage is the cancer and what does this mean?

Can my cancer be cured?

Which website can I trust for more information?

# Treatment

What are my treatment options?

What is the goal of the treatment?

- To eliminate the cancer?
- Help me feel better?
- Or both?

Who will be part of my cancer team and how can I reach them with questions or concerns?

How does this treatment affect:

- My daily life activities
- Work
- Exercise

What are the short and long-term side effects of treatment?

If I experience side effects, how will they be treated?

# Clinical Trials

How do clinical trials help people with cancer?

What clinical trials are available for my cancer?

How do I find information about them?

What happens during a clinical trial?

What are the costs associated with my participation in a clinical trial?



# Follow-up Care

What support services are available to me?

To my family?

May I contact you or the nurse if I have other questions?

Where can I find resources for my family and support system?

- Young children, teens
- Parents of adult patients

Who should I call with questions or concerns during non-business hours?

If I'm worried about managing the costs of cancer care, who can help me?

Who handles health insurance concerns in your office?



# Support

What is the chance that the cancer will come back? Should I watch for specific signs or symptoms?

What long-term side effects or late effects are possible based on the cancer treatment I received?

What follow-up tests will I need? How often will I need them?

How do I get a treatment summary and survivorship care plan to keep in my personal records?

Who will be leading my follow-up care?



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**Have Cancer Questions?**

**Call our nurse line: 612-624-2620**

**or email [ccinfo@umn.edu](mailto:ccinfo@umn.edu)**