Advocating for Yourself: A Guide for Cancer Patients



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-centerred 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?

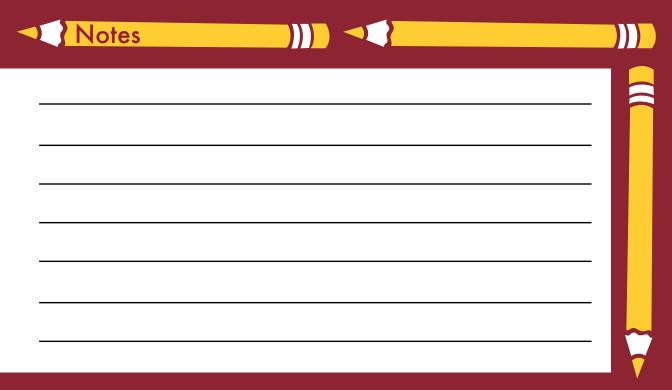
What long-term side effects or late effects are possible based on the cancer treatment I received?

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?

| Notes | |
|-------|-----|
| | |
| | — [|
| | |
| | — |
| | |
| | |





Have Cancer Questions?
Call our nurse line: 612-624-2620
or email ccinfo@umn.edu