Anal Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [2], 03/2016

ON THIS PAGE: You will find some questions to ask your doctor or other members of your health care team, to help you better understand your diagnosis, treatment plan, and overall care. To see other pages, use the menu.

Talking often with the doctor is important [3] to make informed decisions about your health care. These suggested questions are a starting point to help you learn more about your cancer care and treatment. You are also encouraged to ask additional questions that are important to you.

You may want to print this list and bring it to your next appointment, or download Cancer.Net?s free mobile app [4] for an e-list and other interactive tools to manage your care.

Questions to ask after getting a diagnosis

- What type of anal cancer do I have?
- Can you explain my pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- What is the stage and grade of my cancer? What does this mean?

Questions to ask about choosing a treatment and managing side effects

- What are my treatment options?
- What clinical trials are available for me? Where are they located, and how do I find out more about them?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- What is the goal of each treatment? Is it to eliminate the cancer, help me feel better, or both?
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What are the possible side effects of each treatment, both in the short term and the long term?

- Who will be part of my health care team, and what does each member do?
- Who will be leading my overall treatment?
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, or perform my usual activities?
- Will I need a colostomy bag?
- Could this affect my bowel function? If so, for how long?
- Could this treatment affect my sex life? If so, how and for how long?
- Could this treatment affect my ability to become pregnant or have children? If so, should I talk with a fertility specialist before cancer treatment begins?
- If I?m worried about managing the costs of cancer care, who can help me?
- What support services are available to me? To my family?
- Whom should I call for questions or problems?
- Is there anything else I should be asking?

Questions to ask about having surgery

- What type of surgery will I have? Will lymph nodes be removed?
- How long will the operation take?
- How long will I be in the hospital?
- Can you describe what my recovery from surgery will be like?
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What are the possible long-term effects of having this surgery?

Questions to ask about having radiation therapy or chemotherapy

- What type of treatment is recommended?
- What is the goal of this treatment?
- How long will it take to give this treatment?
- What side effects can I expect during treatment?
- What are the possible long-term effects of having this treatment?
- What can be done to relieve the side effects?

Questions to ask about planning follow-up care

- 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, and 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?
- What survivorship support services are available to me? To my family?

The next section in this guide is Additional Resources [5]. It offers some more resources on this website beyond this guide that may be helpful to you. Or, use the menu to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

Links:
[1] http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/anal-cancer/questions-ask-doctor
[2] http://www.cancer.net/about-us

[3] http://www.cancer.net/node/24958
[4] http://www.cancer.net/node/29951
[5] http://www.cancer.net/node/18474