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Childhood Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor

This section has been reviewed and approved by the Cancer.Net Editorial Board [1], May / 2012

Questions to Ask the Doctor

Talking often with the doctor is important [2] to make informed decisions about your child?s 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.

- What type of cancer has been diagnosed?
- What stage is the cancer? What does this mean?
- Can you explain my child?s pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- What treatment options are available?
- What clinical trials are open to my child?
- What treatment plan do you recommend? Why?
- What is the goal of this treatment?
- Will this treatment take place at a pediatric cancer center? Why or why not?
- Who will be part of my child?s health care team, and what does each member do?
- Who will be coordinating my child?s overall treatment and follow-up care?
- How much experience does my child?s health care team have in treating this specific type of childhood cancer?
- What are the possible side effects of this treatment, both in the short term and the long term?
- How will this treatment affect my child?s daily life? Will he or she be able to go to school and perform his or her usual activities?
- Could this treatment affect my child?s ability to have a child (fertility) in the future?
- If I?m worried about managing the costs related to my child?s cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?
- What are the chances that the cancer will recur?
- What follow-up tests will my child need, and how often will he or she need them?
- What support services are available to my child? To my family?
- Whom do I call for questions or problems?

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