

HIV and AIDS-Related Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [1], October / 2013

Questions to Ask the Doctor

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 in this guide, use the colored boxes on the right side of your screen, or click ?Next? at the bottom.

Talking often with the doctor is important [2] 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](#) [3] for an e-list and other interactive tools to manage your care.

General questions:

- What is my diagnosis? What does this mean?
- Can you explain my pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- What are my treatment options?
- What clinical trials are open to me?
- 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?
- Who will be part of my health care team, and what does each member do?
- Who will be coordinating my overall treatment and follow-up care?
- What are the possible side effects of this treatment, both in the short term and the long term?
- How can my HIV infection be managed during cancer treatment?
- How will the cancer treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?
- Could this treatment plan 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 related to my medical care, who can help me with these concerns?
- Whom should I call for questions or problems?

For people who need surgery:

- What are the possible side effects of surgery?
- Will I need to stay in the hospital for this surgery? For how long?
- When can I expect to recover from surgery?

For people who need chemotherapy, immunotherapy, or targeted therapy:

- What type of therapy or medications will I receive?
- How do I prepare for this treatment?
- What side effects can I expect from this treatment?
- What can be done to relieve the side effects?

For people who need radiation therapy:

- What kind of radiation therapy will I receive? How often will I receive this treatment?
- How do I prepare for this treatment?
- What side effects can I expect from this treatment?
- What can be done to relieve the side effects?

After treatment:

- What follow-up tests will I need, and how often will I need them?
- What are the chances that the cancer will return?
- What support services are available to me? To my family?

To continue reading this guide, choose ?Next? (below, right) to see some additional resources that may be helpful to you. Or, use the colored boxes located on the right side of your screen to visit any section.

Links:

- [1] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>
- [2] <http://www.cancer.net/node/25171>
- [3] <http://www.cancer.net/node/29951>