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Kidney Cancer - Questions to Ask the Doctor [1]

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board](#) [2], 08/2015

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 on the side of your screen.

[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 kidney cancer do I have?
- What type of cell makes up the tumor?
- Can you explain my pathology report (laboratory test results) to me?
- What is the stage of my cancer? What does this mean?
- What is my prognosis?

Questions to ask about choosing a treatment and managing side effects

- What are my treatment options?
- What clinical trials are open to 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?
- Who will be part of my health care team, and what does each member do?
- Who will be coordinating my overall treatment?
- How will this treatment affect my daily life? Will I be able to work, exercise, and perform my usual activities?
- 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 in the future? If so, should I talk with a fertility specialist before cancer treatment begins?
- If I'm worried about managing the costs related to my cancer care, who can help me with these concerns?
- 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?
- Can I have a partial nephrectomy? If not, why?
- If I first receive a type of treatment other than surgery, can surgery be done later, if necessary?
- Who will be doing the surgery? How experienced is this person with this type of cancer?
- 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?
- What are the possible long-term effects of having this surgery?
- Will I need treatment after surgery? What type of treatment?

Questions to ask about having immunotherapy or targeted therapy

- What role, if any, will targeted therapy play in my treatment plan?
- What is the goal of this treatment?
- Does this center have expertise in using high-dose IL-2? If not, what is the nearest center with that expertise?
- 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?
- How can I keep myself as healthy as possible during treatment?

Questions to ask about planning follow-up care

- What is the risk of the cancer returning? Are there signs and symptoms I should watch for?
- 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 coordinating 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], and it offers some more resources on this website beyond this guide that may be helpful to you. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/kidney-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/18982>